HE LEADS THOSE WHO ARE WAITING TO THROW THE NAZIS BACK INTO THE SEA

"I would actually welcome the invasion. . . . I would welcome the opportunity of throwing the Germans back into the sea. They have done it twice to us, and it is about time we got some of our own back." In making this declaration General Sir Alan Brooke, Commander-in-Chief Home Forces, speaks from the immense experience gained with the B.E.F. when he was in command of the Second Corps and as Commander of the new Expeditionary Force sent to France after Dunkirk. In this photograph General Brooke (right) is standing beside Major-General Percival and Lieutenant-General Sir Ronald Adam.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

Hats Off to the Men Who 'Kill' the Bombs!

Courage of a very high order is required in the men of the Bomb Disposal Sections of the Royal Engineers whose job it is to dig up and destroy the time-bombs distributed by Nazi raiders. Some of their deeds of heroism are described here, and tribute is paid also to some civilian workers well worthy of inclusion in the heroes' ranks.

NOT until the monster time-bomb was successfully removed from the hole which it had dug close to the foundations of St. Paul's Cathedral (see page 326) did the nation wake up to the existence in their midst of a body of men whose heroism is of that supreme kind—the cold-blooded. Yet those four days of dangerous toil at the top of Ludgate Hill was but one incident out of many such. Since the Nazi raiders started dropping time-bombs in their attacks on London and the provinces, the Bomb Disposal Sections of the Royal Engineers, whose principal job it is to dig out the bombs, take them away to some convenient open space and there explode them, have been kept exceedingly busy. By day and by night they have toiled so that that dislocation of our communications, that interruption of the nation's business, which are the Nazis' objectives, shall be as short as possible.

For the most part, their heroic labours go unrecorded in the Press, because, as the soldiers themselves put it, "it's all in the day's work." Only when instances of exceptional gallantry have received official recognition do we hear anything about them. Recently, on September 17, the "London Gazette" announced that the King had been pleased to approve awards of the Medal of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for Gallantry (now the George Cross), to four members of the Bomb Disposal Sections of the Royal Engineers; and it went on to tell in the most matter-of-fact way of the heroic deeds that had been recognized by the grant of this Cross, which ranks next to the V.C.

The first was Lieutenant E. W. Reynolds, 101/102 Bomb Disposal Sections, who on August 17, 1940, was sent to investigate a 250-kilo bomb which had fallen in a garden among some council houses and had not exploded.

"Digging down 17 ft. he found that it had a new type of fuse, about which no instructions had at that time been received. Finding that traffic was suspended on the road and that the inhabitants had had to be cleared out of their houses, he removed the fuse and found that it had a clockwork delayed action. The risk that he took was great, and merit of his action was the greater for lack of exact knowledge of the type of fuse he was dealing with." A fortnight later, on September 3, he was summoned to deal with another unexploded bomb found amongst the debris of some wrecked business premises. He found on arrival that it had a clockwork fuse which was still ticking; and, suggesting that the sooner it was dealt with the better, he stated that he was willing to do so forthwith. "In view of the damage to property that would have been caused by the explosion of such a large bomb in such a congested area and especially of the possible effect on the public morale, permission was given and Lieutenant Reynolds immediately extracted the fuse and rendered the bomb inoperative."

Next we have the story of Second Lieutenant E. E. Talbot, 103 Bomb Disposal Section, who on August 24-25, after having been present for the whole time, 12½ hours, taken to dig down to an unexploded bomb, diagnosed when it was brought to the surface that it was of the delay-action type, and ordered his men to a safe distance while he examined it.

"As the bomb appeared to be of a new type, Lieutenant Talbot decided to remove it to a place where it could do no damage if it exploded. Still keeping his men under cover, he carried the bomb on his shoulder for some 200 yards and placed it in a safe spot. From the start of the work there was a risk of the bomb going off, and Lieut. Talbot set a fine example of courage and devotion to duty."

Our third story concerns Second Lieutenant W. L. Andrews, who on August 26, while in charge of Nos. 22 and 23 Bomb Disposal Sections, experienced some difficulty in trying to extricate the fuse of a bomb.

"After withdrawing it about 1½ in. the fuse dropped back into position actuated by what appeared to be magnetism or a spring. Removal was attempted several times without success. 2nd Lieutenant Andrews then placed his section under cover, and after tying a piece of cord to the ring of the fuse discharger, pulled, with the result that the bomb exploded. He was blown a considerable distance, and two of the men received splinter wounds. Throughout, 2nd. Lieut. Andrews displayed great coolness and keeness in the interests of the Service."

When Five Sappers Were Killed.

Finally, we are told of Lance-Sergeant W. J. Button, No. 48 Bomb Disposal Section, who on August 18 was ordered with his section to continue the work of excavating an unexploded bomb.

"Although he knew well that, owing to the time already spent on excavation, the bomb was liable to explode at any moment, he continued the work of his section with great coolness. The bomb eventually exploded, killing five sappers of the section, and throwing Lance-Sergeant Button a considerable distance. Although considerably shaken, he behaved with great coolness, collected the rest of his section at a safe distance, ascertained that none of them was injured, notified the first-aid detachment, and reported to his section officer by telephone."

But not only soldiers are engaged in combating the menace of the time-bomb; there are civilians whose daily work takes them into the same deadly field. To take one instance, there were the employees of the Gas Light and Coke Company, who were called in to deal with the gas main which had been set on fire by the bomb at St. Paul's and who had to put out the fire before Lieutenant Davies and his men could get to work digging out the bomb. When they first arrived on the scene they found that two of the Royal Engineers were already badly gassed, and the foreman and his mate promptly applied artificial respiration. Then he and three of his gang cut off the gas supply and got the fire brigade to flood the main with water. Later, there was a second outbreak of fire, and again the flow of gas was cut off and the fire brought under control. In peacetime gangs of gas workers are always in a state of readiness to deal with any damage which may happen to the mains, particularly through fire; in wartime their responsibilities are immensely increased, and as for danger—well, who would be keen on tackling the flames which are licking the crater at the bottom of which is a huge bomb which may go off at any moment?

These men, seen at their depot, form part of the heroic contingent of the Bomb Disposal Section of the Royal Engineers which removed the one-ton time-bomb that buried itself close by St. Paul's Cathedral on September 11. On September 15 the bomb was taken to Hackney Marshes, where it made a 100-ft. crater when exploded (see page 326). *Photo, L.N.A.*

Their Heroism Is of the Cool-Blooded Sort

Deeds calling for that supreme form of courage, that in cold-blood, are performed by the men of the Royal Engineers who deal with delayed-action bombs. A one-ton bomb similar to that which threatened St. Paul's Cathedral fell, by a strange irony, close to the German Hospital in London. It penetrated 20 feet into the ground. As this photograph shows, the earth dug away could be removed only a bucketful at a time. The bomb was got safely away and there were no casualties, as all patients had been evacuated. *Photo, Topical*

De Gaulle: Standard-Bearer of 'Free Frenchmen'

Before the war few had heard the name of General de Gaulle. Today, however, he has achieved widespread recognition as the man who, when France at the direction of the men of Vichy abandoned the fight, raised the standard of Free France. In preparing this article we have been indebted to "De Gaulle's France and the Key to the Coming Invasion of Germany," by James Marlow (Simpkin Marshall, Ltd.).

INSIDE France the prevailing mood is one of defeatism; and so far as the men of Vichy can ensure it the same spirit prevails in the overseas dominions of the French Republic. But in London a Free French movement has been born—a movement which day by day goes from strength to strength. Its founder, its leader, and its inspiration is General Charles de Gaulle; and his right to speak and act for that part of the French people and the French armed forces which have refused to grovel before the Nazis at Pétain's behest was acknowledged by the British Government on June 28.

General de Gaulle, founder of the Free France movement designed to counter the defeatist policy of the Pétain Government, arrived at Dakar on September 23 in an attempt to secure French West Africa. Disappointed in his reception, however, and unwilling to shed French blood, he withdrew.

General de Gaulle was born at Lille in 1890. In 1910 he entered the famous military academy of St. Cyr, and in due course was granted a commission in the 33rd Infantry Regiment and fought with distinction as lieutenant and company commander in the World War. He had already been twice wounded when in the course of the terrific fighting at Douaumont, the fort at Verdun which cost the lives of so many thousands of fighters, he was struck by a shell splinter and was carried away into captivity on a German stretcher. After the Armistice he served under General Weygand in Poland in 1920-1921, and then there followed years of varied military duty at home and abroad. In 1937 he was given the command of a brigade of tanks with the rank of colonel.

By now he had achieved widespread recognition as an expert on the subject of mechanized warfare. Between 1932 and 1939 he published a number of papers and three books on the subject, one of which—"Vers l'Armée de Métier" was not only highly extolled by M. Reynaud, later French Premier, but was read with the very greatest of interest by German workers in the same field. Indeed, the Germans seem to have profited by the book far more than the French, for the French generals, and the politicians who supported them, looked with extreme disfavour on the man who had the temerity to suggest that the Maginot Line could be overrun by an avalanche of tanks. To them de Gaulle appeared as a crank: today, but too late, they must recognize that he was all too sound a prophet.

At the beginning of 1940, when the war on the Western Front seemed to have arrived at a position of stalemate, de Gaulle submitted a memorandum to the military authorities in Paris entitled "The Advent of Mechanized Force," in which he urged once again the adoption of an offensive technique based on the use of mechanized armoured forces. "In the present conflict," he wrote, "as in all those that have preceded it, to be inactive is to be beaten. In order that we should be in a position to act and not only to remain passive, we must create a new instrument. Mechanized power, whether terrestrial, aerial or naval, would enable us to preserve ourselves from future attacks from Germany, to seize her strongholds and bases, to expel her from the regions which she has already or shall have captured, to blockade her, bombard her; in fact, to drive our weapons into her vitals from every side."

This memorandum, like its predecessors, was pigeon-holed, but M. Reynaud found in it fresh confirmation of the views which he had expressed even some years before. Shortly after M. Reynaud became Premier, Colonel de Gaulle was made a General and given command of the 4th Armoured Division. In the month of fierce struggle which followed de Gaulle was one of the few French generals who won any considerable successes; at Laon between May 16 and May 19 he launched several successful counter-attacks with his armoured divisions, and he repeated the performance at Abbeville a fortnight later. Concerning the latter General Weygand paid a high tribute to him in an Order of the Day:

One of the most powerful recruits to General de Gaulle's Free France movement is General Georges Catroux, who until his supersession by the Vichy Government was Governor-General of the great colony of French Indo-China. Born in Algeria 63 years ago, General Catroux was one of Marshal Lyautey's most able subordinates in Morocco, and during the present war commanded the Mulhouse Division and later an army corps in Algeria. *Photos, Howard Coster and L.N.A.*

Tanks! More Tanks! Hundreds of Tanks!

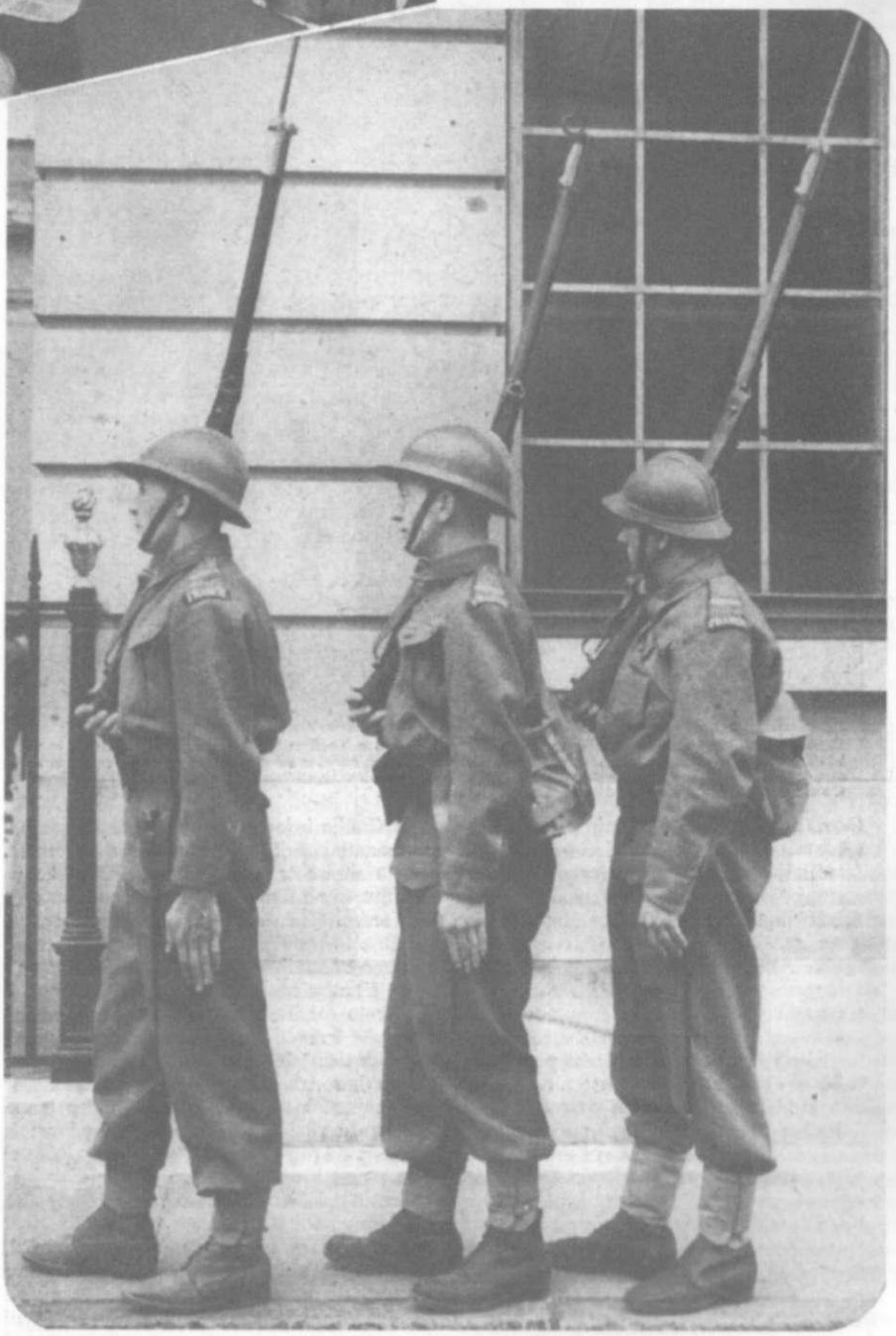
So steady is the stream of volunteers for General de Gaulle's Army of Free Frenchmen that recruiting offices have been opened in London. Above, some volunteers are being interviewed.

" This admirable, audacious and energetic leader attacked on May 30th and 31st at the south of Abbeville towards the enemy bridgehead very strongly held, breaking through German resistance and advancing 15 kilometres (nearly 10 miles) inside the enemy lines and capturing many hundreds of prisoners and considerable material."

Then, early in June, Reynaud called him to his side in Paris, giving him the appointment of Under-Secretary of State for National Defence and War. In every way he supported his chief during that terrible week when the news from the front was uniformly bad ; he was sent to London to consult with Mr. Churchill, and was present at Tours when the British Premier came by 'plane to stimulate Reynaud's flagging spirit. Later still he was in Bordeaux doing his best to persuade the French Government to carry on the fight from Africa. Again he paid a flying visit to London, and heard from Mr. Churchill's lips the tremendous proposal for Anglo-French union. But when he returned to Bordeaux, Reynaud had fallen and Pétain and Weygand reigned in his stead—the old men who wanted only to negotiate surrender with the enemy. So de Gaulle hurried back to England, and there devoted himself to the self-chosen task of organizing French resistance from the capital of the empire which would have remained France's firm and faithful ally. In one of his early broadcasts to the French people he uttered a trumpet call to liberty-loving Frenchmen wherever they might be throughout the world. " The war is not lost," he averred, " the country is not dead, hope is not extinct. *Vive la France !* "

His challenge did not go unheeded. In France there were, no doubt, thousands who would have cheered and helped him if they could, but on them lay the heavy hand of the Nazis and their puppets of Vichy. Abroad, however, in the vast territories of the French Colonial Empire some of those who listened were stirred into action, and the first step of what was shortly to become a formidable revolt against Pétain, and all that Pétain stands for, was taken in Chad in the heart of French Equatorial Africa, where Governor Eboué declared that henceforth he would follow General de Gaulle as a Free Frenchman serving Free France. Before September was out, General de Gaulle himself had proceeded to Dakar in an attempt to rally the patriotic forces in West Africa.

Looking into the future, General de Gaulle sees the time not far off when Germany will be wearied and exhausted, while against her the forces of her enemies have accumulated tremendously. Then, he declares, is the time when we must attack. " Not with an expeditionary force of men in battle-dress with rifles at the slope. Tanks and Guns. More Guns and more Tanks. Thousands, tens of thousands of Aeroplanes."



Although they are wearing British battle-dress uniform, the tricolour badge and the word " France " worn on the shoulders of these soldiers show that they have become members of General de Gaulle's army of Free Frenchmen. Other French articles in their equipment are their rifles and headgear—steel helmets or berets as the occasion may demand.

Photos, L.N.A. and Keystone

Dakar's Guns Make Answer to De Gaulle

When it was announced that General de Gaulle was heading an expedition of Free Frenchmen to Dakar, it was confidently anticipated that very shortly French West Africa would, like Chad and the other Equatorial colonies, rally to the cause of Free France. But as told here, the expedition ended in most disappointing fashion.

On the morning of Monday, September 23, General de Gaulle appeared off Dakar, and called on this key-town of France's empire in West Africa to rally to the flag of Free France.

For weeks past, ever since the humiliating armistice concluded in the railway coach at Compiègne, Dakar had been the scene of a number of manifestations suggesting that there were many in the colony who looked with sympathy on the resistance to the Vichy Government which was being organized by General de Gaulle from London. These manifestations assumed such proportions that the order went forth from Vichy that Governor Cayla should be replaced by Governor Boisson, who was more likely to be amenable to their dictates. Then came reports that German and Italian officers were going by air to Dakar in increasing numbers, under the pretext of freeing certain of their nationals who had been imprisoned during the war, although it was obvious that their principal aim was the control of the air bases there.

Meanwhile the spirit of resistance in at least a considerable element of the population never ceased to grow, and it was fostered both by the economic paralysis and by the rallying to de Gaulle of French Equatorial Africa.

It was, then, with the three-fold aim of responding to the desire of the population for a repudiation of the German yoke, to free the economic life of French West Africa from the slavery imposed by the Armistice, and to prevent the colony from falling into the hands of the Germans, that General de Gaulle came to the decision to invade it himself at the head of a Free French force, military, naval, and air.

His preparations complete, he and his troops sailed from England in French ships under the French ensign and escorted by battleships of the Free French Navy. Accompanying the expedition were considerable British naval forces, but these were in the nature of supplementary protection.

As soon as he arrived off Dakar, General de Gaulle informed Admiral de Laborde, in command of the French naval base there, that in a desire to avoid all bloodshed he was about to send emissaries ashore under a flag of truce. The Admiral replied that he would refuse to see them, and when the emissaries, unarmed and in an unarmed launch, flying the French ensign and the white flag, drew near to the harbour their boat was fired on by the French authorities in the port, and two of the little party were seriously wounded. Shortly afterwards General de Gaulle himself attempted a peaceful landing of his troops, but when the Dakar forts fired on his sloops killing several members of the crews and wounding a large number, the General decided to remove his troops and his ships to a distance.

The batteries of the port also opened fire on the British warships which were standing by, and before returning the French fire the Admiral Commanding signalled; "Will be compelled to return fire unless fire ceases." As the fire of the shore batteries, and also of the great French battleship "Richelieu," which was lying in the harbour, did not cease, fire was returned; and on both sides hits were secured and casualties incurred. Then three French submarines made attacks on the British vessels, with the result that two of the former were sunk, although the entire crew of one were picked up.

Reports of the fighting were both sparse and contradictory, and it was not clear whether there were engaged on the side of the defenders the six French vessels—the cruisers "Montcalm," "George Leygues," "Gloire," and three destroyers—which a few days earlier had passed through the Straits of Gibraltar on their way from Toulon to Dakar. No explanation had been vouchsafed for this naval move except the suggestion that the ships were intended to guard France's sea communications and food supplies coming from West Africa, but as likely as not it was dictated by the distinct danger that General de Gaulle's Free France movement showed signs of securing the upper hand at Dakar.

The arrival of the French warships was, indeed, so opportune as to suggest that somehow or other knowledge of the De Gaulle expedition had reached Vichy; and this view is supported by the fact that all those Frenchmen who had expressed sympathy for the Free France movement had been imprisoned by order of M. Boisson shortly before the expedition came in sight. Some surprise was expressed in London that the "Montcalm" and the rest had been allowed to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, but it may have been thought that there were elements in the vessels who might be expected to declare for Free France as soon as they escaped from the control of Vichy.

But even so, as the official statement issued in London on September 26 made it clear, "it is no part of the policy of the British Government to interfere with the movements of French men-of-war so long as they are not destined for any ports under German control." For this reason no hindrance was put in the way of the vessels in question passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, although when later, having reached Dakar without interference, they put to sea again steaming south they were headed back to Dakar by ships of the Royal Navy, as it was thought that they might be intending to interfere with the situation existing in French Equatorial Africa which had already declared for General de Gaulle.

The statement concluded with words which came as a deep disappointment not only to the supporters of Free France, but to Britain and Britain's friends. "When it became plain that only a major operation of war could secure the fall of Dakar it was decided to discontinue hostilities, as it had never been the intention of his Majesty's Government to enter into serious warlike operations against those Frenchmen who felt it their duty to obey the commands of the Vichy Government. General de Gaulle himself was most anxious that he should not be the cause of bloodshed to his fellow-countrymen. The forces concerned are therefore now being withdrawn from the region of Dakar."

One of the three French cruisers which were sent from Toulon to Dakar, the "Gloire," is seen here. She is a ship of 7,600 tons, launched in 1935, and carries nine 6-inch guns and sixteen anti-aircraft guns. With her went her sister ships, "Montcalm" and "Georges Leygues." Their guns would be no match for those of a British battleship. *Photo, René Zuhr*

When the R.H.A. Stood at Bay at Hondeghem

Of all the close-range fighting between British and German troops in France during the last few days of May, 1940, there was no more gallantly contested engagement than that of the defence of Hondeghem village by "K" battery of the Royal Horse Artillery. This story of the action was assembled by Mr. Douglas Williams, of the "Daily Telegraph," from accounts by two officers and the battery sergeant-major.

On May 26 enemy forces were in full flood along the main road from St. Omer to Mt. Cassel in their thrust to the Channel ports. Strategically sited and immediately in the direct line of their advance lay the village of Hondeghem. To delay the enemy it was vital to defend it, and the task was allotted to K Battery, R.H.A.

The battery commander selected a small headquarter staff and F troop of four guns for the purpose. No infantry were available, and the only additional garrison was a detachment of 80 men and one officer of a searchlight unit.

The village formed a virtual outpost in the widely dispersed British line, and its defence was far from easy. The defenders' armament was restricted to four 18-pounder guns, Bren and Lewis guns, and rifles.

By the evening of May 26 final arrangements had been made. Two guns were posted on the outskirts to command the roads by which the Germans would probably come, and the two others were placed at strategic points inside the village. Bren and Lewis guns were located in makeshift strong points, chiefly in the upper windows of houses.

The night passed quietly in an atmosphere of great tension, as scouts had reported the enemy in force concealed in woods only four miles away. At 7.30 a.m. word was received by a dispatch rider that the two outer guns (I and J sub-sections) had engaged the enemy and destroyed a number of vehicles and two or three tanks as they advanced down the main road. Those two sub-sections were quickly overwhelmed by an avalanche of tanks and were both out of action and the crews captured or disabled within 10 minutes of the opening of the battle.

Such a set-back so early in the day was a serious matter, and all considerations were now centred on the defence of the village itself. Armoured vehicles and supporting parties of German infantry began to penetrate its outer perimeter, and the two remaining guns were immediately in action, registering hit after hit at short range on the enemy as they tried to place machine-guns in house windows as they advanced.

A Shell through the Cookhouse

The enemy managed to get one machine-gun into position in the battery's cookhouse, but just as they were about to open fire L sub-section gun, gallantly handled, under intense fire, with the same precision as if the men were deploying during gun-laying practice, put a round straight through the cookhouse wall, effectively silencing the post.

The cookhouse was set on fire and all the day's food was destroyed, but the enemy gun was knocked out, and later the dead crew were discovered in the embers of the building. The remains of the German machine-gun are now a prized memento in the battery.

Another enemy gun was located by K sub-section gun behind a farmhouse which had served as a park for the battery vehicles. Although some of our men might have been there, it was essential to silence the gun, so the 18-pounder was trained on the farmhouse and the first round brought the whole place down in a shower of plaster and dust. Another four rounds were pumped in to make sure, and the machine-gun was not heard again. One British driver who was in the farmhouse had a miraculous escape and rejoined his unit little the worse.

Both K and L guns were now hotly engaged, firing point-blank at 100 yards range, using Fuse 1. So close were the Germans that the gun crews were being attacked with hand grenades, but casualties, apart from the total loss of J and I sub-sections, remained small, only one man having been killed and two wounded. Both guns were in very exposed positions, but they maintained a fast rate of accurate fire; every round took effect.

About 1 p.m. large numbers of German light and medium tanks were seen from the top of Hondeghem church approaching Cassel and Hazebrouck. It was the last observation made from that position, for the enemy then shelled and demolished the church.

Attacked from All Sides

Machine-gun fire was now coming from all sides, and both 18-pounders had frequently to change position, their crews manhandling them up and down the village street and firing from all angles. Meantime, help came from an unexpected quarter. D troop of the battery, on the slope of Mt. Cassel, and controlled by wireless, opened up a defensive barrage. So accurate was their shooting that although at one time their shells were dropping within 50 yards of the two guns in the village street not a single round fell among their own people. Unfortunately, three of D's four guns were put out of action.

When ammunition ran low the gun could fire only once every five minutes; but the enemy's activity, too, seemed to die down a little, while battery drivers, with rifles, did some excellent work taking pot shots at the enemy from windows.

At 3.30 p.m. it became apparent that the small garrison could hold out no longer. Ammunition was almost gone; all food supplies had been destroyed; no reinforcements, except one small detachment of Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, had appeared; and they were in danger of being surrounded.

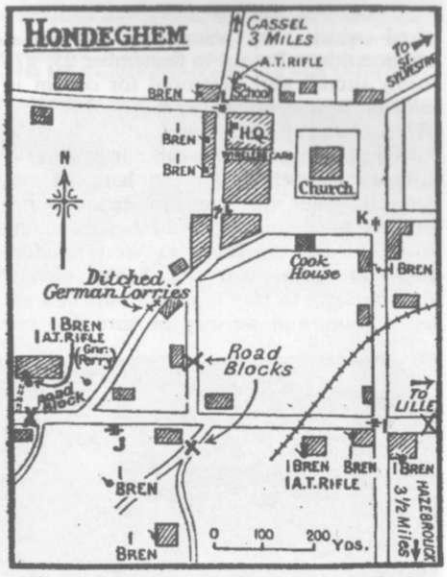
At 4.15 p.m. the withdrawal was ordered and the two guns and the two wounded men were sent off ahead, for a rendezvous at St. Sylvestre, some two miles away on the road to Cassel. The remainder followed later by a different route.

At St. Sylvestre, however, the main road running through the village was found to be held by German medium tanks, and positions were hastily found around the church where a group of some 20 R.A.S.C. men armed with rifles and Bren guns joined the action. The enemy were by now aware of the British troops' arrival, and a volley of hand grenades suddenly started from behind the tombstones.

Germans appeared on all sides and the Troop Commander decided that they could be dislodged only by a direct charge. Two parties with bayonets fixed advanced round each side of the churchyard wall, each man shouting, as ordered, at the top of his voice. A terrible roar went up. The psychological effect was just what had been calculated. Three or four Germans were shot, and the rest, throwing away their rifles, broke in a panic and were routed.

Both guns were now again brought into action from the graveyard, and fired what little ammunition was left into the neighbouring houses. One gun was limbered up to its quad (four-wheel drive) for a change of position, but both gun and quad were blown to pieces by two direct hits from a German gun firing along the road.

Though the situation then began to look desperate the men were no whit disheartened, and were still full of fight. Charges were made by small parties against houses where Germans were hidden, and K's one remaining gun continued firing until its last round.



Where K Battery of the R.H.A. made its gallant fight on May 27th, 1940.
Courtesy, "Daily Telegraph"

As it was now late and enemy lights, presumably summoning reinforcements, had been observed, it was decided to make a dash to escape. The men piled into the remaining lorries, while the one gun left (L sub-section) was put out of action and abandoned.

Away went the British vehicles, under fire from German tanks in the fields. There was a sharp left turn and then a right turn in the road commanded by a German machine-gun. This S had to be taken at speed and the first vehicle was ditched at the second curve. The occupants, luckily, were able to scramble into the third vehicle, which got safely past. The second meanwhile had negotiated the first turn, but the driver missed the second and went straight through a hedge into a field. As the ground was dry he rejoined the road as it skirted the field.

Escaping at last from German machine-gun fire, the convoy went on in comparative safety and after a mile or so startled a party of the East Riding Yeomanry by arriving alive by the very road they had just mined!

London Still the Main Target of Nazi Bombs

The air battle for London in the week September 18 to 24 continued with hardly abated fury, mainly by night, rising to a fresh level of destruction in the central area on the night of September 24-25. Widely scattered attacks were also made in the provinces.

So far Hitler has failed utterly in the two main objects of his air attack on Britain. He has not attained aerial superiority in our skies, and his terror-raids have not provoked in our people a desire for peace negotiations ! To a Briton it is almost inconceivable that anyone could expect the second result, though the ordeal has been trying, especially to the workers of the eastern and southern districts of the Metropolis. Some unfortunates, bombed out of their homes, have been turned out a second time by attacks on West End districts in whose unoccupied flats they had been placed, but the spirit of the people has been magnificent.

The Luftwaffe continued its attacks on aerodromes, but was foiled again by our alert and well organized ground defences and by our ever-ready fighters. Striving to wear down our fighter strength and to cause the R.A.F. to use up its reserve, Hitler sent over his own fighters in hundreds, and brought into service even faster and later-built aircraft—the best that his designers had contrived—which were being saved up for a lateroccasion. But up to September 25, 876 enemy aircraft were destroyed for certain in raids on Britain, while the R.A.F. lost only 237 machines and 115 pilots.

Night bombers get through our defences—in small numbers and much harassed and hampered—but the war can certainly not be won by destroying small houses in the East End and big shops in West London. There are signs that our fighter aircraft are beginning to play a greater part in night interception, and we may be sure that our gunners will put up even a fiercer barrage as time goes on. The Secretary for Air has hinted that other steps are being taken to curtail the activity of Goering's young men by night as well as by day.

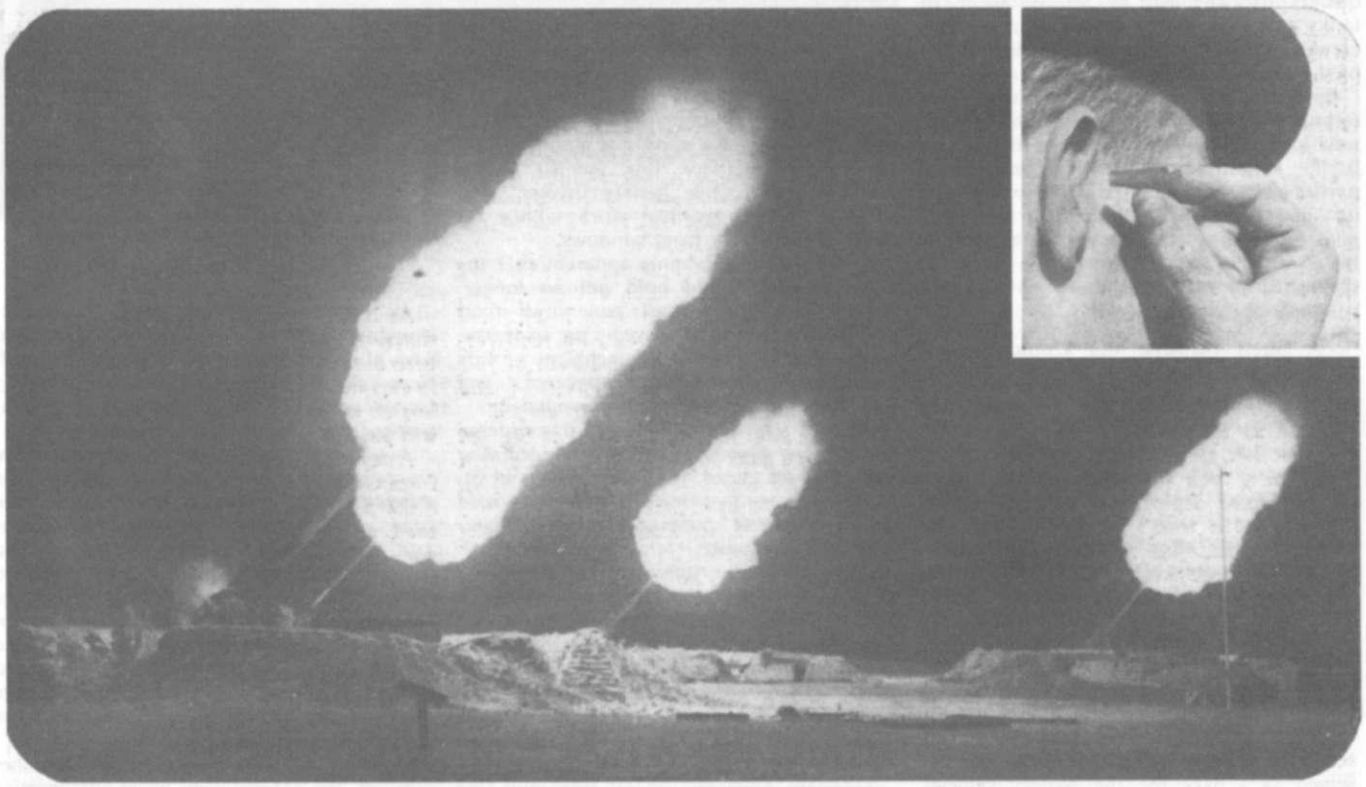
The heroism and devotion to duty of bomb disposal units of the Royal Engineers was recognized officially by the award of the E.G.M. (Medal of the O.B.E. for Gallantry) to Lieut. E. W. Reynolds, 2nd Lieuts. E. E. Talbot and W. L. Andrews, and Lance-Sergt. W. J. Button, announced in the " Gazette " of Sept. 17.

On the night of Wednesday, Sept. 18, the London barrage was resumed when raiders (mostly single machines) came over. Bombs were dropped in the suburbs and damage was done in the West End also. During what was described as a day of continuous air engagements, mainly over the South-eastern area of England, the Nazis lost 46 aircraft to nine of ours destroyed (five of our pilots saved). Five separate waves of bombers and fighters came over, attacks beginning at 9.30 a.m. and not ceasing until 8 o'clock on Wednesday evening. The Nazis were very roughly handled by our fighters, and jettisoned their bombs in some cases on the mere approach of our Hurricanes or Spitfires.

On Wednesday, too, the Merseyside area experienced its fiercest raid. More than a hundred high-explosive bombs were dropped at night, besides many incendiaries. Fine work continued to be done by the A.A. gunners, who brought down 16 raiders in nine nights. An even more satisfactory result was that when the Nazis encountered our barrage on the fringe of the Metropolitan area many of them turned tail after dropping their bombs there and then over open country. Thus it was that only a few got through to London. Time after time the challenge of the guns would be heard, following the sound of approaching aircraft ; after two or three rounds there would come the scream of bombs and then the shattering explosions as the missiles reached the ground. The raiders tried new routes, but batteries of mobile A.A. guns came into position and kept the Nazis on the run.

No large-scale raid was made during Thursday, the 19th, and of the few enemy aircraft that carried out hit-and-run attacks, five were shot down. Of two which dropped bombs on East London, one was brought down by our fighters. At night a number of raiders, flying singly, approached the capital from the north-west, using a new route and travelling at a low altitude. The barrage sounded fiercer than ever before, and many more searchlights were in operation.

On Friday morning, the 20th, some two hundred enemy aircraft flew inland over the Kent coast—to be met by a multitude of British fighters. Hurricanes and Spitfires closed in around the leading formations, and after a hot engagement sent them back over the Channel, where the fight continued. There was also a fierce fight over the Thames Estuary, but though a warning was given in London the danger had soon passed and no raider got nearer than the outskirts of the capital on the east

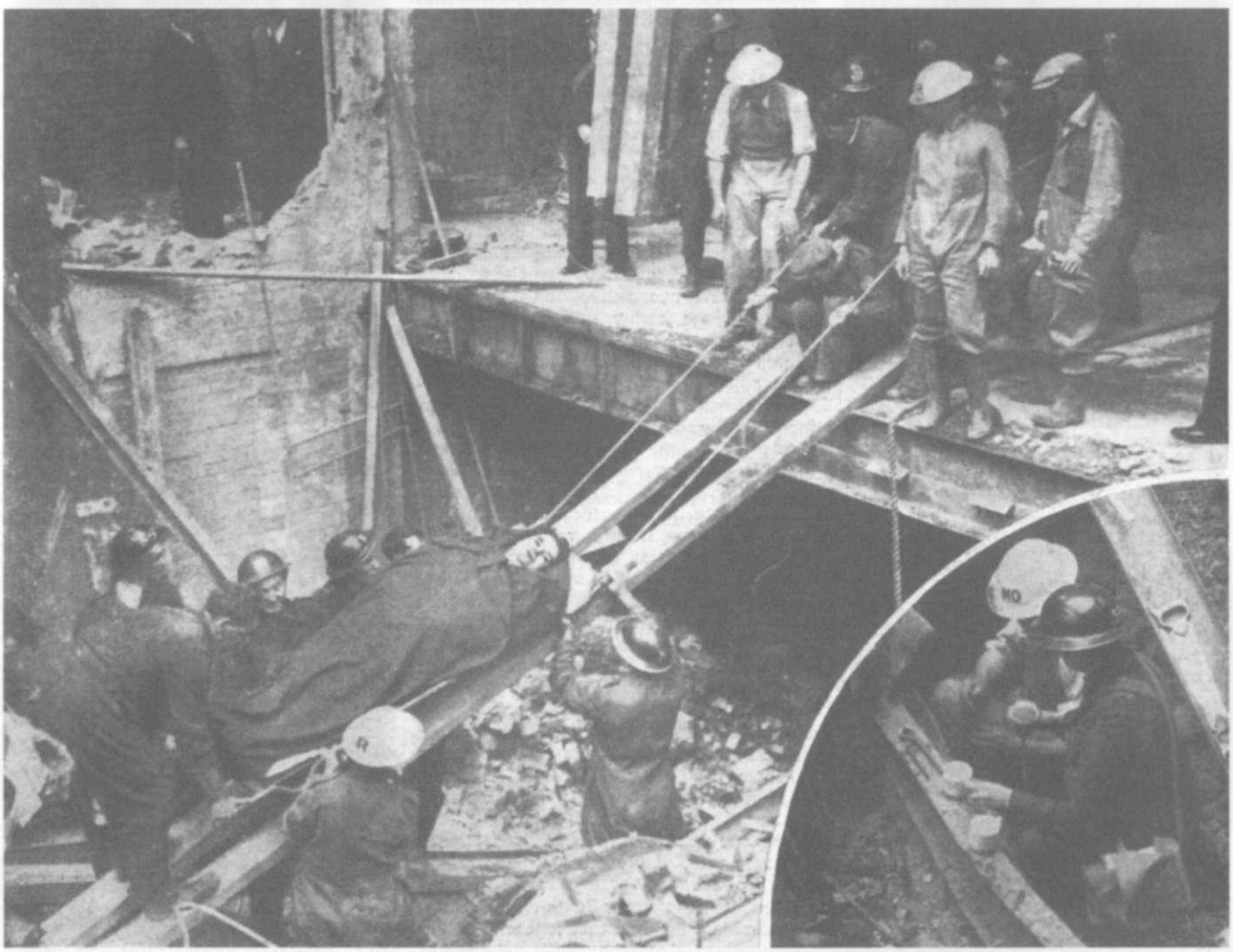


One of the first photographs to be taken of the fierce anti-aircraft batteries whose powerful barrage has proved the terror of enemy night-bombers. Guns and crews are here seen in action in the Central London's area during a night raid. London's nightly resistance to Nazi attackers has been aptly compared with that of Verdun in the last war. Inset is seen one off the new ear-plugs which deaden the noise of guns and exploding bombs.

Photos, Central Press and Topical

Indiscriminate Bombing Brings Tragedy in Its Train

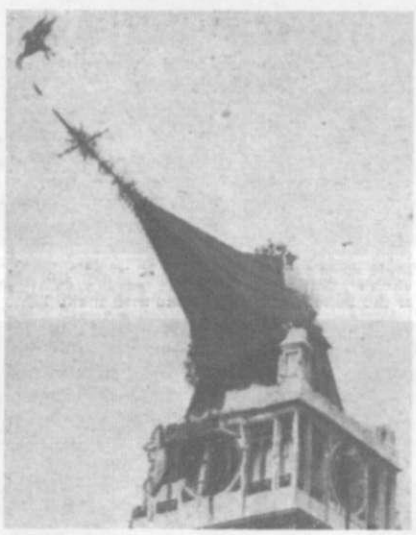
Here is the story of this Anderson shelter. Three people were taking refuge in it when a bomb destroyed their house. Blown into the air, the shelter landed in the next garden and the occupants staggered out unhurt. And unhurt, too, was the Sunday dinner they had with them (left).



Seventeen hours' continuous toil were necessary to rescue Thomas Reaves, a London taxi driver, from the ruins of a garage. He is seen above being lowered from the building on a stretcher. For 15 hours he had been fed by a doctor through a tube, right. Alas, all the efforts were unavailing, for he died later in hospital. His wife, to whom he had been married only two months, was with him and was killed.

Photos, "Daily Mirror"

The Capital Makes the Best of a Bad Job



Pegasus, the winged horse on the summit of the bombed Inner Temple Library, came safely to earth when the turret was pulled down. Top, he is carried away; centre, in flight.

GERMAN & BRITISH AIRCRAFT LOSSES

German to April 30, 1940

Total announced and estimated—West Front, North Sea, Britain, Scandinavia... 350

	German	British
May	1,990	258
June	276	177
July	245	115
Aug.	1,110	310
Sept. 1-25	878	241
Totals, May to Sept. 25 ...	4,499	1,101

Daily Results.

	German Losses	British Losses	British Pilots Saved
Sept.			
1	25	15	9
2	55	20	9
3	25	15	8
4	54	17	12
5	39	20	9
6	46	19	12
7	103	22	9
8	11	3	1
9	52	13	6
10	2	0	—
11	89	24	7
12	3	0	—
13	26	0	—
—	506	168	82

	German Losses	British Losses	British Pilots Saved
Bt. fwd.			
Sept.	506	168	82
14	18	9	6
15	232	25	14
16	7	1	—
17	12	3	2
18	46	9	5
19	5	0	—
20	4	7	3
21	2	0	—
22	1	0	—
23	11	11	8
24	8	4	2
25	26	4	3
Totals	878	241	125

None of the figures include aircraft bombed on the ground or so damaged as to be unlikely to reach home.

Additional German Losses. Sept. 11: 4 shot down over Continent. Sept. 15: 2 by Fleet Air Arm. Revealed on Sept. 26 that 47 more shot down on Sept. 15: total, 232. Figures for Sept. 25 incomplete.

Civilian Casualties. Intensive air attacks on Britain began on Aug. 8. Casualties during August 1,075 killed, 1,261 seriously injured.

Mr. Churchill stated that during the first half of September civilian casualties amounted to about 2,000 killed and 8,000 wounded, about four-fifths being in London. In the fighting services casualties were only 250.

Mass Raid Casualties in London. Sept. 7: 306 killed; 1,337 injured. Sept. 8: 286 killed; about 1,400 injured. Sept. 9: about 400 killed, 1,400 injured.

German Aircraft Destroyed in Britain. From September 3, 1939 to September 24, 1940 the German machines destroyed around and over Britain totalled **2,256.** In that time 579 British aircraft were lost, 280 pilots being saved.

and south-east, where a few bombs were dropped. In the morning bombs at Brighton caused some fatal casualties.

There were two distinct raids on Friday night. In the earlier one several raiders got through to Central London, where a church hall and a manufacturing establishment adjoining it were set on fire. Underneath the hall was a refuge, but people sheltering there were unhurt. Many fires were started in South and South-east London, but were soon got under control. After a short interval there came a more intense raid on much the same localities.

A.A. gunners shot down a Junkers 88 bomber at Merton, Surrey, early in the morning. The pilot was killed and another of the crew came down in a parachute at Balham, three miles away. In its fall the bomber demolished a house, but only two people were injured. Occupants of the house were in their Anderson shelter and were unscathed. Next door an Anderson shelter was crushed flat, but the people had taken refuge beneath the stairs and thus escaped.

People going to work in the East End on Saturday morning, the 21st, were killed by bombs dropped by a lone raider. A factory and shops were hit, and several houses destroyed also. During the day the enemy made several attacks by single raiders or small formations, mainly over South-east England. About midday bombers tried to reach London but were stopped on the outskirts. A bomber was shot down in the afternoon.

In London's fifteenth night raid, over sixty hostile aircraft took part, flying up the

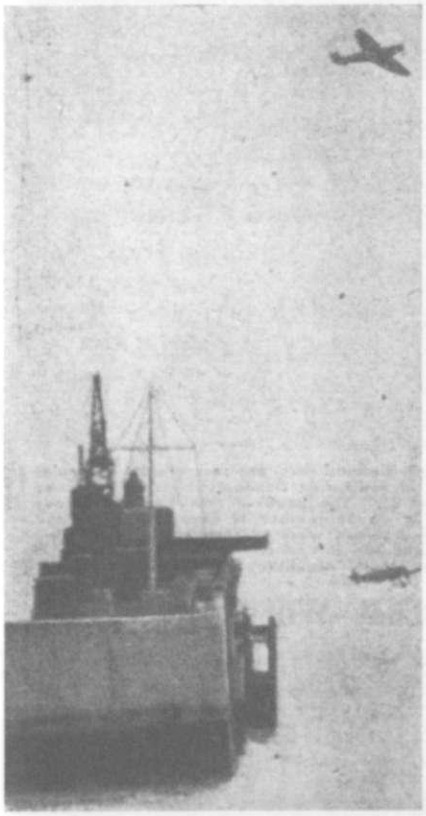
Lambeth has earned fresh fame. Here, after the raid of September 17, great-hearted people of the district are doing their famous walk.

Shops that have been bombed have carried on as best they could. Here at a desk on the pavement business is being carried on.

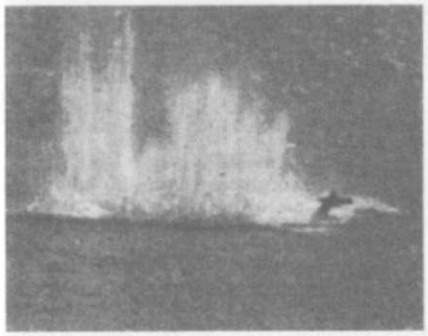
Lord Redesdale is one of those who have put their mansions in the West End at the disposal of the authorities to house refugees. Here is the scene in the ballroom of his town house.

Photos, G.P.U., Fox and Keystone

London's Face is Scarred But Her Heart is Sound



A Messerschmitt 110 that was being pursued and machine-gunned by a Spitfire plunged down to the sea, narrowly missing Folkestone harbour pier (above).
Photos, "Daily Mirror," exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED



Estuary early on Saturday evening. Two determined attacks were made, but, met and hotly engaged by Hurricanes and Spitfires, they were soon driven off. Four raiders were accounted for by A.A. gunners; one, trapped by the searchlights, was brought down by a direct hit; another, flying towards Central London, was blown to pieces in the air; a third was shot down near Bognor; the fourth was crippled by the guns and finished off by a fighter. More hospitals and churches were bombed.

Sunday, September 22, was marked by little enemy activity, though lone raiders came over East Anglia and the London area and dropped bombs. At night, however, a terrific clamour broke out as our guns came into action against a continual stream of Nazi bombers that approached the Metropolitan area from various directions. Fires started by an early raid were speedily put out by the A.F.S., so that the glow should not help later arrivals.

THE NOISE BOMBS MAKE

RECENTLY a bomb fell just outside the gate of St. Dunstan's headquarters. It made a crater 36 ft. wide and 15 ft. deep. Some of the staff were in the air raid shelter, the door of which was 33 ft. from the crater. Its door was splintered to pieces and sucked out by the intense vacuum which follows an explosion.

The people inside experienced a few minutes of extreme anxiety because they did not know whether they were hurt or not, or whether the roof might come down. But luckily all was well.

The air raid shelter in which my wife and I were sleeping was about 90 ft. from the bomb crater. I was standing outside the shelter. Two or three bombs dropped, but I could hear by the noise they made coming down that they were some distance away. If the whistling noise remains more or less constant, you can be sure the bomb is at any rate 200 or 300 yards away, possibly more. If, on the other hand, the bomb is really dropping on to you, or very near to you, you are immediately aware that the whistling noise is getting rapidly louder. These were not screaming bombs but ordinary high-explosive bombs, which make a whistling like a shell approaching, and a little like the swish of a rocket.

I went into the shelter, sitting on the step. Then I heard this bomb coming down, and immediately recognized that it was coming near. The whistling, sizzling noise increased terrifically as the bomb drew nearer. I had time to wake my wife up, tell her to put her fingers in her mouth, which is a good way of ensuring that the mouth is open to protect the ears, and to shut the door of the shelter.

If you really hear the bomb as I did from the time it leaves the aeroplane it is surprising how long it takes to come down. I think a bomb falls at 150 m.p.h., whereas sound travels at about 720 m.p.h., so that the noise comes well in advance of the missile. One of the St. Dunstan's buildings was between us and the bomb, so that we did not receive the direct blast, but it was sufficient to shake the whole shelter and fill it with dust. A second or two after the explosion a large quantity of rubble and other debris came down on the shelter.

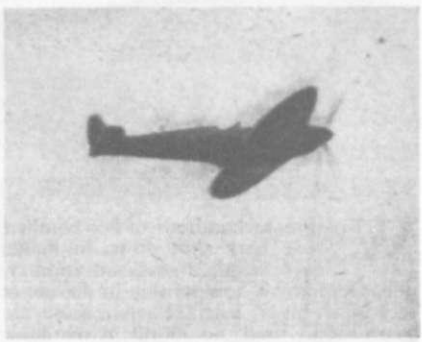
The interesting thing about this is that we, and all the others concerned, are less apprehensive now than we were before.—*Sir Ian Fraser writing in "St. Dunstan's Review.*

Large fighter formations, bent on the destruction of R.A.F. aircraft, took part in Monday's daylight raids. They were repulsed and sent back across the Channel, but losses were approximately equal on both sides. Later in the day there were attacks on our coastal towns, and at Eastbourne a single enemy aircraft dropped 28 bombs, demolishing houses in a working-class neighbourhood. Among the enemy machines that crossed the Kent coast was a gigantic four-engined bomber, with a very large escort. Together with these and the smaller bombers it turned tail in face of our fighters.

Two raiders were shot down on Monday night, and during the following day eight more Nazi machines were destroyed. Several attempts were made by the enemy to reach London during Tuesday, but his massed formations were broken up long before they got to the outskirts of the capital.

Thousands of incendiary bombs were dropped in the London area on Tuesday night. The warning sounded after an enemy reconnaissance machine had circled over the central areas. Many fires were caused, some by large oil-bombs, but the fire fighters in all cases soon got them under control. Five London hospitals were bombed, and one of Wren's City churches suffered a little damage. A college, two large stores, and a police-station were among the buildings that also suffered.

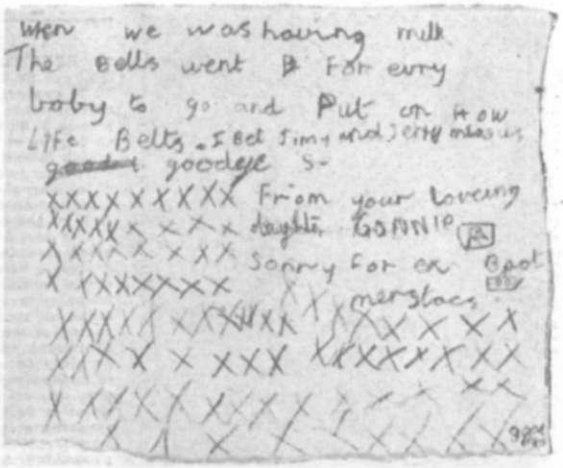
Air Marshal Sir A. Barratt disclosed on Sept. 25 that the figure of 185 German raiders down on Sep. 15 should be increased by 47 more that "almost certainly came down."



The German 'plane finally plunged into the sea (left), sending up a huge column of water; and when the spray died down, the tail was sticking out of the water (above). When it was all over, the pilot of the Spitfire could be seen by spectators on shore doing the "victory roll" (right).

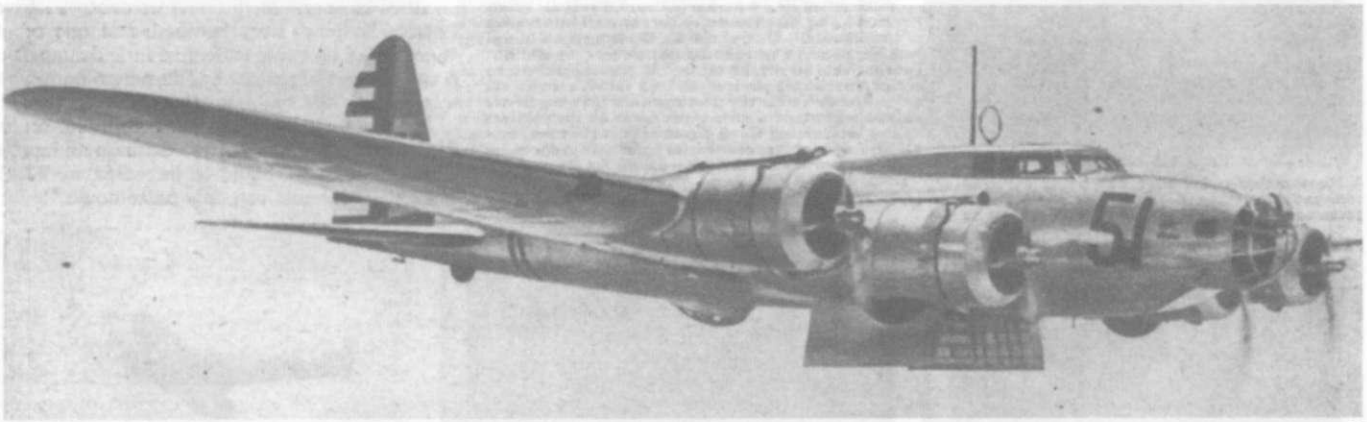
The Nazi air raids on London have done no serious damage to military objectives or to anything that could seriously interfere with the war machine. Therefore, photographs of many of London's bombed buildings have been published. This photograph, however, is typical of all that the Nazis dare publish of the work of the R.A.F. in Berlin—an unrecognizable military objective.

Shadow of the Big Bomber Over Humble Homes


when we was having milk
The Bells went B For every
baby to go and Put on How
LIFE Belts. I Bet Jimmy and Jerry was in
goodbye S-
XXXXXXXXX From your loveing
daughter GRIMMOND
Sorry For ex Spot
mersiacs

Mr. and Mrs. Grimmond (left) are seen amidst the ruins of their home in south-east London, which was bombed on September 22. The hand of fate has been heavy upon them, for on September 17 five of their twelve children were drowned when the ship which was taking them to Canada was torpedoed. Right is a page from their little daughter's last letter.

Two Formidable Aircraft: German and an American They Will Soon Meet



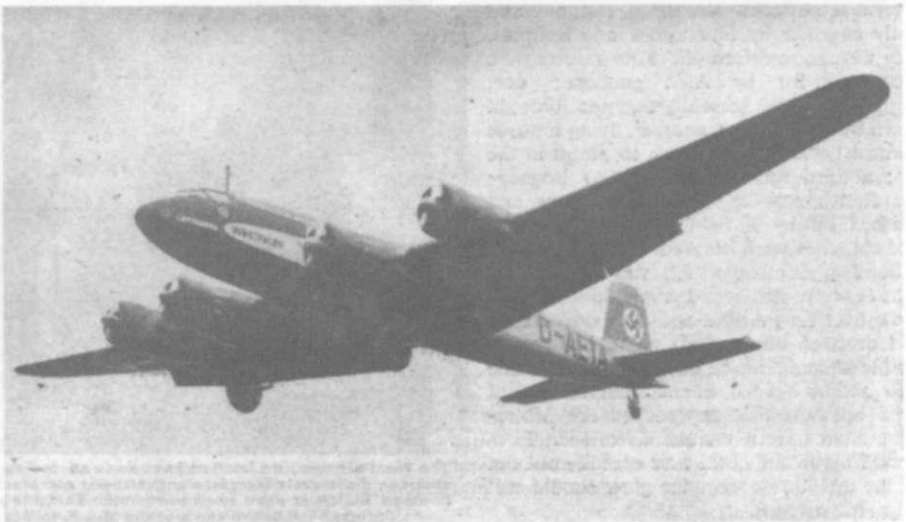
WHEN many hundreds of her bombers have been shot down in flames over Britain's seas and countryside, Germany is now turning to the use of very much bigger machines than those she has hitherto used, no doubt in the hope that they will be able to stand up better against the all too deadly attacks of our Spitfires and Hurricanes. One four-engined giant bomber recently identified amongst its cloud of satelite Messerschmitts is the Focke-Wulf Condor (below right). This machine was originally designed as a passenger-carrying 'plane, and made its first flight from Berlin to Croydon on June 24, 1938; its four engines give a speed of 200 m.p.h., some 100 m.p.h. less than that of corresponding types in the R.A.F.

Our fighter pilots could ask for nothing better as a target, and it is hardly surprising that its appearances above our coast have been few and brief, and exceedingly well escorted. Its only advantage is that it has an exceptionally long range, for it has proved its capability of doing the journey from Berlin to New York non-stop. It is interesting to note that the German factory where the original Condors were produced is reported to have been practically wiped out in the course of recent R.A.F. bombing raids.

Another huge German bomber is the Junkers 88, several of which have been shot down recently in south-east England. One of these was found to be of the newest make—not more than four months old—and on its fuselage was painted an emblematic red dragon.

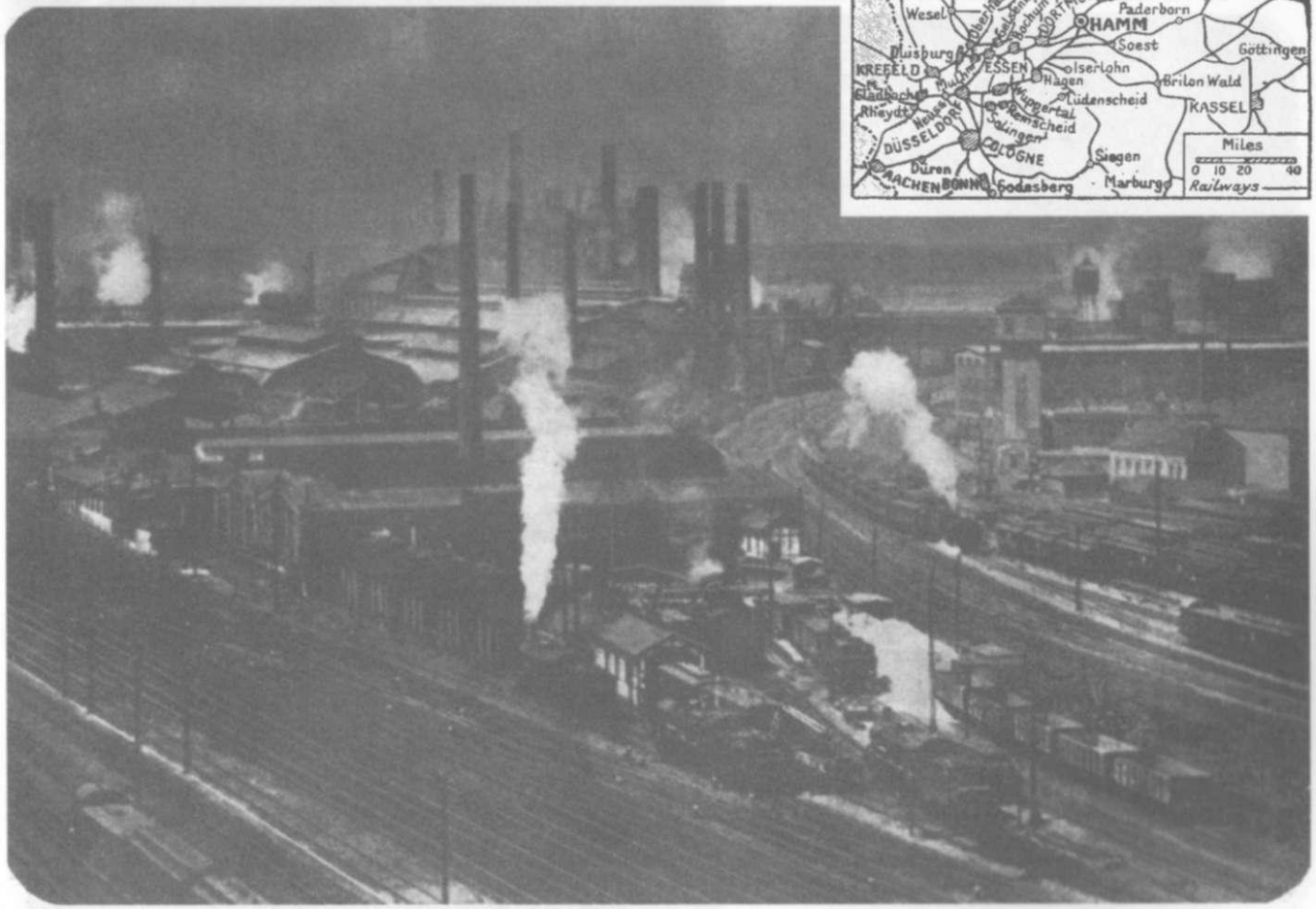
Much more powerful and with an even greater range is the American "Flying Fortress" (above) bomber which R.A.F. pilots will shortly be employing in their raids over Germany. It is a monoplane with four engines and is armed with both cannons and machine-guns; and its maximum range of three thousand miles will make a mere nothing of a trip from British aerodromes to Berlin and back again.

The "Flying Fortress" is built by the Boeing Aircraft Co., and it is probable that the bombers supplied to Britain will be of the very latest type, the 30-ton B15 which has a wing span of 150 feet.



Mines or Bombs, They Make a Good Job of It

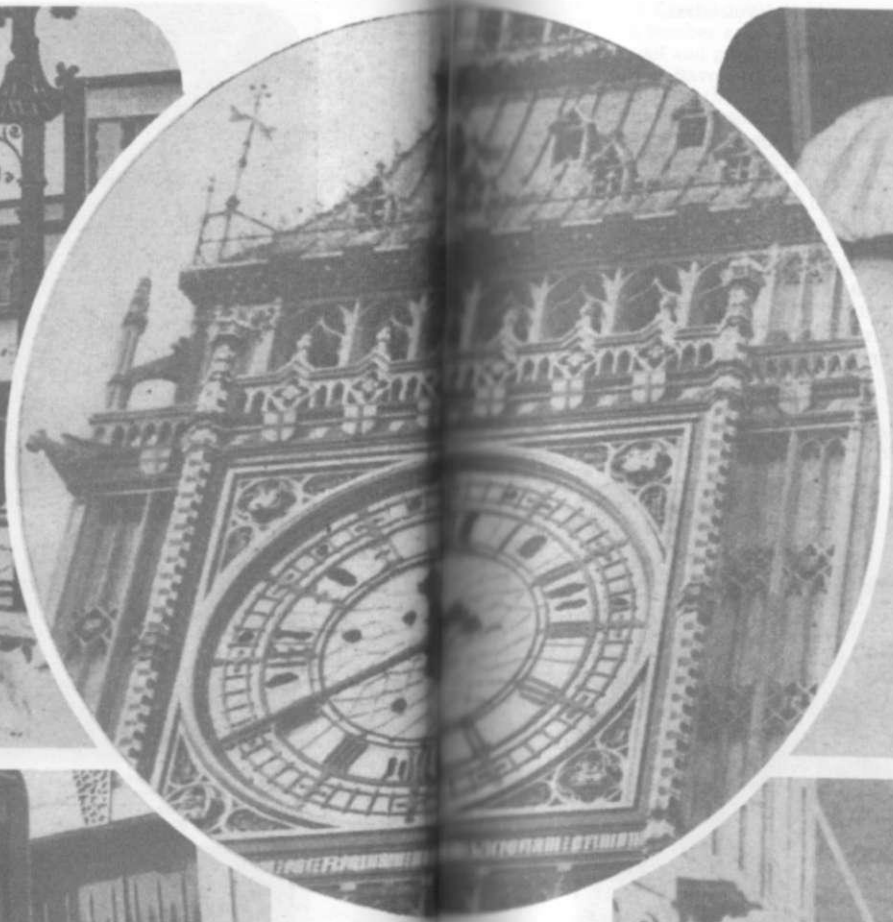
One of the duties of the Bomber Command is laying minefields in enemy waters, and for this duty special aircraft are employed. Above, a mine is being fixed in the slings of a Hampden bomber. More than 30 minefields have been laid in this way, from the Norwegian coast to the Bay of Biscay. *Photo, "The Times"*



Germany's great industrial district, the Ruhr, has been persistently bombed by the R.A.F., and its position makes it an easier target than many of those to which the R.A.F. has made nightly visits. Here is one of the great railway marshalling yards between Hamm and Dortmund. This yard, together with the blast furnaces of the Union Iron and Steel works seen in the photograph, had been attacked over 60 times by September 21. The chief railway centre is Hamm, and the map, centre, suggests its importance. *Photo, E.N.A.*

Though Hell Falls From Heaven, London Maintains as Ever the

Though time-bombs have put the butchers' shops out of action the housewives will not be deprived of their Sunday joint. In the market-place in a south-east suburb the steel-helmeted butcher is exchanging meat for coupons, and above his van floats in proud defiance the Union Jack.



"Big Ben's" [illegible] has stopped a splinter or two. It will take more than that to stop it giving the right time to London and the world.

Thumbs Up, London!

The Lord Mayor of London, Sir William Coxen, broadcast to New York on September 21:

Today London stands as the very bulwark of civilization and freedom. The streets of my city will be defended to the last. London City has sometimes been attacked, but never sacked. London has girded herself for resistance and victory.

Britain is a beleaguered fortress. Night after night flies out from this island the spearhead of our attack against Germany—the Royal Air Force.

A Visit to Czech Airmen in Britain

Somewhere in Britain a Czechoslovak Air Force has come into being and two squadrons are now attached to the R.A.F. Below we have an account of a visit paid to one of their aerodromes by Mr. Henry Baerlein.

It is highly probable that if this article is translated for Herr Hitler he will lose his notorious patience, this time with the Czechs. A number of them, airmen and other fighters, unwilling to remain in their homeland, temporarily under his yoke, made their way, not without peril, across the closely guarded frontiers, and after serving in Poland and France a good many of them have joined the forces in this country. A visit I have just made to an aerodrome, part of which is allocated to them, has been a delightful and inspiring experience. The Czech airmen are the happiest of warriors, for now they know that they can concentrate on the fight with none of the complications which unfortunately overtook them in France and with 'planes whose excellence they fully realize. That they know how to handle them is proved by the fact that up to the day of my visit they had brought down nineteen Nazi 'planes and lost only a single pilot, with three or four others for a while in hospital.

What strikes one at first is the modesty with which these young men speak of their exploits. Most of them had a hard time in escaping from the German sentries and the Gestapo; while in France, where they destroyed over a hundred German machines, they were not always met with consideration. Thus when they were told to proceed from Central France to Perpignan, near the Spanish frontier, they were informed on arriving there that no petrol was available for them. Perhaps the French in their own agitation did not realize what would happen to the Czechs if they should fall into German hands. If one of them is missing from the Protectorate his mother receives a call from a Gestapo man, who asks if the son is in a foreign army. The mother replies that she does not know.

"Then I can tell you," says the man, "for he fell some days ago." If the woman faints or exhibits her emotion in some way the Gestapo man regards the evidence as complete.

The Escape from France

So it was most necessary for the Czechs to get away from France. By one means or another they flew to Algiers; one to whom I spoke found a barrel of petrol and a small ladle with which it took him three hours to replenish his reservoir. In Algiers there was chaos, and in Morocco, where the Czechs spent ten days in anxious idleness, the commander of the garrison finally ordered that the magnetos should be removed from every 'plane and that black troops should prevent access to the hangars. A most capable Czech officer arranged for all his compatriot airmen to reach either Gibraltar or Lisbon, he himself being the last to leave, and if he had not been in mufti the Gestapo would have laid hands upon him.

"We do not wish to speak ill of the French," said the airmen, "now they are in such misfortune, but after all the Germans are neighbours of ours, we know them well, and it was a shock for us in France to find that, instead of German method and organization, there was such light-heartedness, coupled with scorn for the Germans, and at the same time a yearning for peace. As for the French 'planes, too many had been hastily constructed, though a very good one was produced about a month before the collapse. But it is no exaggeration to say that the material in England is 100 per cent better. It is splendid to fly over here."

Naturally it does not suit the Germans that the country which they are "protecting" should have these representatives in Britain. One day the German wireless declared that the vessel containing the Czech airmen had been sunk; a few days later the same wireless station urged all the Czechs to go home, adding that they would not be punished by the Protecting Power if they followed this advice. As a matter of fact no Czech airman lost his life on the voyage, and not all of them came to England by the routes I have mentioned. One of our bombers, for instance, brought more than thirty whom it had luckily picked up somewhere in France. They embarked at such brief notice that some were clad in pyjamas and some were barefoot.

"We are sometimes asked," said one of the airmen, "why we did not bring more of our own 'planes from Czechoslovakia. When Hitler marched into Prague in March, 1939, and most of us decided to leave, the weather was terrible and the drifts of snow made it very difficult for us to move our 'planes. Besides, we considered that if we were to land in a foreign country with these 'planes we might be extradited to the Germans, for no country was at war with them, and they would of course have accused us of theft, which is an extraditable offence."

When President Benes visited his airmen he referred to the British Government's recognition of his own Government as "the first hopeful turning point in the history of the Czechoslovak nation after Munich. Now we have started again to rise and I have a justified confidence that the Republic will be restored as a strong, free, democratic and happy State, even better than it was before." The President concluded: "You Czechoslovak airmen will, perhaps, be the first to enter the struggle here in Great Britain. Some of you will, perhaps, visit in the air our dear Motherland and will, perhaps, fly over our beautiful Prague. Then you will be the bearers of our most sacred ideals and messengers of our future victory."

On August 6, Dr. Benes, President of the Provisional Czechoslovak Government, visited two Czech squadrons attached to the R.A.F. in England. Above, Dr. Benes chats to one of the pilots just about to take off. Left, a typical Czech pilot.

Photos, P.N.A. and G.P.U.

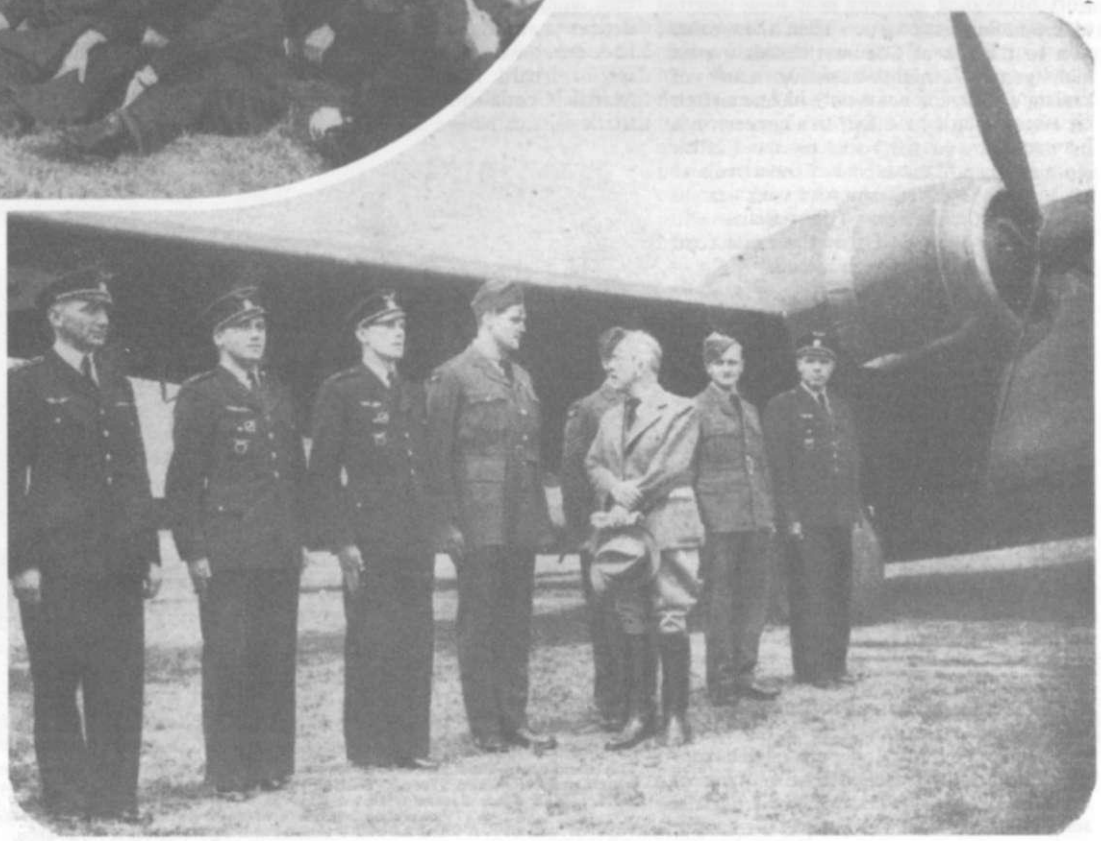
The German radio in Prague replied to this by alluding to "the irresponsible activity of certain Czech emigrants," and stated that "the Czech nation believes in the Fuehrer's word and in the future of the Greater German Reich." That is wishful thinking on the part of Goebbels, for the whole Czech nation, looking forward with serene confidence to the hour of its liberation, hears with delight of the activity of certain emigrants in Britain, some on the ground and others in the air.

Czechs Help to Down the Nazis Over London

TWO Czechoslovak units are now stationed with the R.A.F.—a bomber squadron and a fighter squadron. In both the flying personnel and ground maintenance staffs are all Czechoslovaks, many of whom have been in action above France and Britain since the beginning of the war. Hardly had the force been constituted when early in September the fighter squadron shot down six Messerschmitt 110s and one Dornier 215 bomber, approaching London by way of the Thames Estuary. The Czechs in their Hurricanes dived on the Nazis out of the sun, each choosing one of the enemy to attack, and probably the first the enemy knew of their approach was the hail of bullets which began to hit them. One of the Czech pilots had to bale out, but apart from that not a single one of the Hurricanes had a bullet-hole to show that they had been in action. As soon as he landed one of the Czechs asked, "When do we take off again?"

This Czech sergeant-pilot, now with the R.A.F., was one of a trio of world-famous aerobatic performers; his comrades were killed in France.

Circle: Seated on the ground before him, these Czech aircraftmen are listening with keen appreciation to the Czech officer who is explaining the details of a British Spitfire. They are members of one of the Czech squadrons now serving with the R.A.F. in England.



Dr. Eduard Benes, who was President of Czechoslovakia from 1935 to 1938 and is now President of the Provisional Czechoslovak Government in London, is here seen at an English flying field chatting to crews of the Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron, now attached to the R.A.F., and some of their English "guides."

Photos, E.N.A. & G.P.U.

Graziani Takes the Road Into Egypt

Egypt was invaded by the Italians on September 13, but the Egyptian Government failed as yet to find in the stroke any reason for declaring war. Only a waste of desert was involved, and (as we tell below) the British strategy was directed towards drawing the enemy ever deeper into the inhospitable wilderness.

BENEATH a blazing sun and through an all-enveloping haze of white dust Marshal Graziani's army of invasion crossed the frontier from Libya into Egypt on September 13. Preceded by a screen of 4·7 anti-tank guns mounted on armoured cars and tiny Fiat two-man tanks, the Italian tanks, lorries, and infantry moved across the stony desert in two long columns like a black stream of ants. The first followed the line of the coast, where they had the advantage of a good road ; but the second, some miles to the south, had nothing better than the rough track which winds along the edge or escarpment of the desert plateau.

In invading Egypt the Italian columns are following for the most part the coast road which runs from Libya along the Mediterranean shore to Alexandria, Britain's naval base in Egypt. From Matruh the road is paralleled by a railway. By September 16 the Italians had reached Sidi Barrani, 60 miles inside Egypt.

Having passed through the wire defences that mark the frontier, the Italians occupied Fort Musaid, a customs post now deserted and crumbling into ruin. Then they came down to the sea at Sollum through a pass which proved a death-trap for many of Graziani's men, for not only had one stretch of it been mined by the British engineers, but here and there in the rocks on the hillside Bren gunners had established themselves and took heavy toll of the marchers with next to no loss to themselves. The Italians also discovered to their cost that the coast road from Tobruk had also been mined.

'Capture' of Sollum

Mussolini's propaganda department worked itself into a high state of excitement over the capture of Sollum, and, indeed, in its taking the Italians expended great quantities of shot and shell. But in fact for weeks past the place had been held by a mere handful of British troops, and even these had been withdrawn under cover of darkness when the invasion began. For three days the Italians shelled the village before they charged to the assault, and great must have been their chagrin when, clambering over what was left of the walls, now pounded into their original dust, they discovered that the place was an empty shell.

From Sollum Graziani's columns, keeping close to the shore, arrived at Bugbug, some 25 miles inside Egypt. Here a big motor transport convoy forming part of the vanguard was heavily attacked by a number of British bombers, who swooped in from the sea and left many of the vehicles in flames.

Again the advance was resumed, and on September 16 Graziani could claim the capture of Sidi Barrani, 35 miles east of Bugbug and 60 miles inside the Egyptian frontier, or 75 miles by way of the coast. Hardly had the Italians captured the village when mines laid by the British before their evacuation were detonated, and, as an eye-witness put it, "the entire village full of enemy troops appeared to be blown into the air by the explosion."

At Sidi Barrani the Italians set foot on the macadamized road which runs from Sidi Barrani through Mersa Matruh to Alexandria. But Alexandria is 250 miles and more beyond Sidi Barrani, and Graziani's columns had still 95 miles to march before they would come up against the main British defences at Mersa Matruh. The Italians had done well to cover 75 miles in four days of hard fighting and marching, but Marshal Graziani, hard-bitten old soldier that he is, can have suffered no illusions of an easy and speedy victory. Behind him stretched for 150 miles the thin line of his communications. All his supplies—including every drop of water intended for the parched throats of men or for boiling radiators—have to be brought along the coastal road, within full view of the ships of the Royal Navy and without a vestige of shade to screen them from the reconnaissance 'planes of the R.A.F.

Outnumbered Five to One

True, he had an enormous superiority of men—at least ten infantry battalions each consisting of about 1,000 men, supported by numbers of light and medium tanks and armoured cars, anti-aircraft and field artillery, and a considerable proportion of the Italian Air Force, while behind him in Libya were reserves numbering perhaps 200,000 or 250,000 men. The British, for their part, were outnumbered by at least five to one ; but, on the other hand, the Army under the command of General Sir Henry Wilson was generally admitted to be a splendid force, one hardened by months of training in this very desert. Admitted, the Italians had made some progress into Egyptian territory, but, as a British spokesman affirmed in Cairo, it had never been the intention to defend "that long desert line running southwards from Sollum, but certainly we shall defend Egypt proper, the Delta, and Nile valley." So at Mersa Matruh the British force, composed of British regulars, Australians, New Zealanders and Indians, awaited the Italian approach. Though not even at Mersa Matruh would the Battle of Egypt be fought. Better far that the Italians should be drawn ever deeper and deeper along the coast road, exposed all the time to attacks from the air and to bombardment from Britain's ships along the Mediterranean shore, until somewhere west of Alexandria they should be

The conditions that the Artillery has to face in the Middle East are very different from those which prevail in the West. This gun in action against the Italians in North Africa has to do its work in the open desert with no natural camouflage or protection of any sort. Owing to the extreme heat, even steel helmets must be discarded.
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

Over the Desert the Italians Move Like Ants

The pair of caterpillar armoured cars (above) are being polished up after their day in the desert. Their equipment includes an anti-aircraft gun, which has inspired the crew of one of them to name their ship of the desert "Fly Flapper." Circle, the camera of a reconnaissance 'plane bringing back invaluable records is being carefully unloaded.

brought to battle on a field that the defenders had chosen.

Such, we may suppose, is the strategy of Britain's Command in the Near East; but Sir Archibald Wavell, sitting in his office at Cairo, has to think not only of the Italian columns crawling along the Egyptian coast, but of other columns which may be moving across the desert towards the upper reaches of the Nile. It may well be that Mussolini has given the order to Graziani to launch several such columns from Libya or from Italian East Africa. One, we may suppose, might take the route from Libya south-east across 400 miles of desert, hopping from one oasis to another, to Wadi Halfa on the Nile, where Egypt meets the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Another might strike from the recently captured Kassala on the Sudan-Eritrea frontier due west across the desert to Khartoum, headquarters of the Sudanese administration; while a third, also operating from Kassala, might be directed down the Atbara to its confluence with the Nile at the town of Atbara, where it might not only cut the railway between Khartoum and Cairo, but move eastwards along the line to Port Sudan, Britain's halfway house on the Red Sea.

But (presuming on the possibility) the capture of Khartoum and the overrunning of the Sudan, however damaging to British prestige in Africa, would not be deadly; the battleground where the decision will be sought and made by force of arms is, we may be sure, somewhere within the "Fertile Crescent" which runs through western Egypt, across the Delta and the Suez Canal into Palestine. Somewhere in that semicircle of history-soaked land the Battle of the British Empire will almost certainly be fought.

The hardships of desert warfare are immensely increased by the burning sun beating down from a cloudless sky. There is no natural shade, but the resourceful British soldier often makes his own. These officers of an armoured car carry a big umbrella to protect them when they halt.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

Our Merchant Navy is Stronger Than Ever

This article is, in part, a review of the position of Britain's mercantile marine after a year of Hitler's unrestricted sea warfare. On balance it was actually stronger at the end of 12 months by 100,000 tons. Events of the shipping war in August are also recounted.

WHEN Germany began the war in September 1939, having already sent her submarines and supply ships to strategic points on the important trade routes, it is reasonable to presume that she hoped to equal, or better, the record of sinkings during the height of the U-boat campaign in 1917. In the five months from March to July of that year, the enemy sank over 2,000,000 tons gross of British shipping; equivalent to an annual loss of 4,881,000 tons. By submarine, magnetic mine and bombing aeroplane, it was anticipated that at least this tonnage would be sunk during the first year of the Second Great War, particularly since the average size of our merchant ships had increased during the intervening 20 years. Plans for the blockade of Great Britain were therefore based on the assumption that over five million tons of British shipping would be sunk each year. Indeed, in a flight of fancy, it was claimed by the Nazis that 5,078,038 tons gross had been sunk up to August 4.

As the tables in this page show, the results fell far short of claims and expectations, in spite of the assistance during the latter months of Italy, with her numerous submarines and motor torpedo boats. If armed merchant cruisers, transports and so on (converted passenger liners) are included, the British losses from September 3, 1939, to September 1, 1940, amounted to under 1¾ million tons.

That is one side of the picture. On the other are the tonnage gains. Owing to captures from the two enemies, purchases from neutrals, and new shipbuilding, the tonnage under the British flag was actually greater at the end of the first year than when war was declared. In addition, losses from marine hazards, more numerous owing to wartime navigation difficulties, had been more than offset by the ships of Denmark and France which came under British control when these countries were occupied by Germany.

On balance the British mercantile marine alone, apart from Allied ships or vessels chartered from neutrals, **was stronger at the end of the first year of war by a little over 100,000 tons gross.**

The overrunning by Hitler's armies of most of the Continent of Europe completely altered the shipping situation. On the one hand it added about 6,250,000 tons to the Allied fleets (though some of this was already chartered by the British Ministry of Shipping); but, on the other, it meant that Britain had to draw her supplies of food and raw materials from farther afield. The nearest source, at one time the English Channel or the North Sea, was now, practically speaking, the North Atlantic. The new Allied tonnage could not, therefore, be regarded as a net addition, since more ships were required to transport a given tonnage of goods in a given period than before.

Another factor in the situation, however, was that British ships no longer had to main-

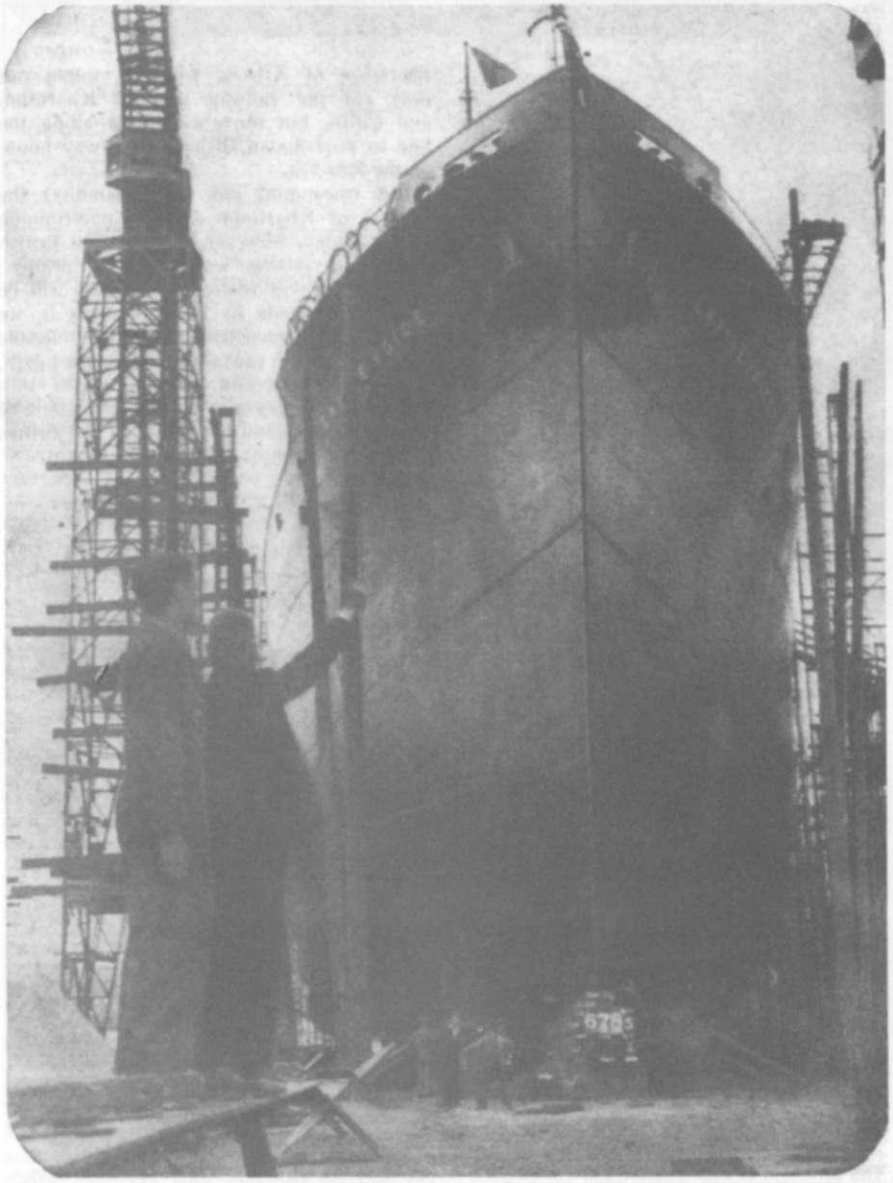
Merchant Shipping War Losses After a Year of War

	Sep. 3, 1939-July 28, 1940	July 28-Sept 1	Sep. 3, 1939-Sep. 1, 1940
BRITISH :	Tons gross	Tons gross	Tons gross
Liners, cargo vessels	1,215,114	258,850	1,473,964
Lost in naval operations	70,316	—	70,316
Naval auxiliaries	111,813	39,220	151,033
Naval trawlers	15,235	1,870	17,105
Totals	1,412,478	299,940	1,712,418
ALLIED	436,335	26,586	462,921
Totals	1,848,813	326,526	2,175,339
NEUTRAL	722,394	46,819	769,213
Totals	2,571,207	373,345	2,944,552

Enemy Losses to September 1, 1940

	Sunk	Captured	Total
GERMAN	705,000	258,000	963,000
ITALIAN	123,000	150,000	273,000
Totals	828,000	408,000	1,236,000

In addition, about 33,000 tons of neutral shipping under enemy control have been sunk.



One of the new merchant ships that are being built at a rate that more than keeps pace with the losses through enemy submarine activity is here seen just about to glide down the slipway. All the old ceremony of christening the ship is dispensed with.

Merchant Shipping Balance Sheet for First Year of the War

British Tonnage, Sept. 1939	**17,892,000**
CREDITS	
Captures to Sept. 1, 1940	408,000
Danish and French ships (temporary possession)	800,000
*Purchase and building to Sept. 1, 1940	800,000
Total	2,008,000
Add Allied Tonnage :	
Norwegian	3,750,000
Dutch	2,000,000
Belgian and Polish	500,000
Total British and Allied *	8,258,000
Neutral tonnage chartered	750,000
Total "Credits"	9,008,000
DEBITS	
British war losses, mercantile	1,544,000
" " " Naval auxiliaries	168,000
†Allied war losses (May-Sept.)	263,000
*British marine losses	190,000
Total "Debits"	2,165,000
NET GAIN	6,843,000
British and Allied Tonnage, Sept. 1, 1940	**24,735,000**

* Approximate figures. † From date neutrals became Allies.

British Seamen Make Vain the Nazi Claims

This cheery party of sailors and soldiers are some of the 620 survivors of the transport, "Mohamed Ali El-Kebir," which was torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic. They are here seen when they arrived at a London station on August 13, 1940. Most of them were wearing borrowed clothes. Every man was ready to go to sea again.
Photo, Central Press

tain in food, equipment and other supplies a large Expeditionary Force in France. At the same time, they were relieved of considerable demands from France herself, for our former Ally was by no means self-supporting in ships.

Taking every consideration into account, the shipping situation at the end of August was very much more favourable than when war was declared. It was still, and always will be, the most vital part of Britain's defensive armour.

All was not, however, plain sailing. The rate of sinkings had increased during June, July and August, and the losses in August were the highest of any month since the war began. This was due partly to intensified submarine activity—the vessels operating from new bases along the Belgian and French coasts, and aided by Italian vessels and trained crews—partly to more extensive bombing, also directed from new bases, and partly to the depletion of the Allied anti-submarine forces after the capitulation of France. In spite of the higher loss rate, however, a considerable reserve of tonnage remained in hand and there was no cause for alarm.

August also saw a new development in the campaign against British shipping. On the 22nd of this month batteries of heavy guns fired on a large convoy moving up the English Channel (see pages 225 and 247). The new menace was, of course, expected, and the escorting warships quickly laid a smoke screen. Although the range was short, as the ships were steaming about halfway between the two coasts, and although more than 100 shells were fired, none of the ships—which were later attacked from the air—was sunk nor seriously damaged.

Large-scale air attacks on coastal convoys began earlier in the month, but they were attended by such a high loss of aeroplanes and so little success that they were abandoned before the end of August. In the first of these attacks, on August 9, about 400 German aircraft took part in a series of raids. They succeeded in sinking only two small ships of 2,540 tons, though seven more—all coastal vessels—were damaged. Sixty German aircraft were shot down. Following this raid, coastal convoys were equipped with barrage balloons. The Germans also made more use of their motor torpedo boats, or E-boats, gaining another advantage from the possession of the Channel ports. On the same day that 400 aeroplanes sank only two coasters, three other ships were sunk by two of these craft, which are larger and slower than their British counterparts.

There was further news of German commerce raiders during August. Early in the month the report was received that the disguised merchant ship "Narvik," mounting four guns on each broadside, had been engaged in the South Atlantic by the auxiliary cruiser H.M.S. "Alcantara," an ex-Royal Mail liner. The "Narvik" had sunk the cargo liners "King John" and "Davisian" a week or so earlier. The "Alcantara" scored a hit, but the "Narvik" escaped with the aid of smoke floats, after a lucky shot succeeded in reducing the speed of the British ship. Towards the end of the month the British liner "Turakina," of 9,691 tons, was shelled by an unknown raider in the Tasman Sea and a few days later the same fate befell the tanker "British Commander" in the Indian Ocean. Either of these losses may have been caused by the "Narvik."

Two more British armed merchant cruisers were sunk in August, both by torpedoes. They were the "Transylvania," of 16,923 tons gross, a former Anchor liner, and the "Dunvegan Castle" of 15,007 tons, a liner built for the Union-Castle intermediate passenger service to South Africa in 1936. They brought the losses of auxiliary cruisers during the first year of the war to seven of 113,141 tons gross, all ex-passenger liners—one owned by the P. & O. Company, two by the Cunard White Star, two by the Anchor Line and one each by the Lamport & Holt and Union-Castle lines.

A transport, the "Mohamed Ali El-Kebir," 7,290 tons, formerly owned by the Pharaonic Mail S.S. Co., was also torpedoed in the Atlantic. The attack was made at dusk, and heavy seas were running. About 740 troops and crew were saved, but 120 were drowned, most of them soldiers who were in their bunks at the time of the explosion. It is a remarkable tribute to the Navy that during twelve months of war, when thousands of troops were convoyed, only three transports (including a small ship of 689 tons) were lost, apart from the evacuation of the B.E.F. from France, when all sorts and sizes of ships never intended for transport duties were employed.

At the end of a year of war, continually active at sea, the British Royal and Merchant Navies were stronger than at the start. The most vulnerable and most vital force of this island country, its shipping, was secure.

Despite Nazi claims, the Channel still remains an open road for British convoys, and the Port of London still carries on. Here, photographed from an escorting warship, is a convoy of small merchant ships proceeding up-Channel, unmolested either by U-boats or coast batteries.

OUR SEARCHLIGHT ON THE WAR

He Defied Hitler—and Died

ACCORDING to reports current in Batavia, Netherlands Indies, General Winkelman, former Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch Army, has died in Berlin. After four days of heroic resistance to the German invaders, with Rotterdam in ruins and many other cities helplessly awaiting a similar fate, it was General Winkelman who had the terrible duty to order the "Cease Fire" and to explain to the Dutch people why further resistance was unavailing. Later he defied the enemy in occupation by circularizing his troops with a statement exposing the German White Book on the invasion of the Low Countries. In July he was sent as a hostage to Berlin because he and his subordinates "had not observed the rules laid down for the demobilization of the Dutch forces." Now comes the report of his death from "heart failure."

General Winkelman, C.-in-C. of the Dutch Army, in a broadcast after the Army had laid down its arms, said: "The war was completely one-sided. To have gone on would have meant that still more innocent victims would have fallen." *Photo, Planet News*

Trinkets Dropped Over London

ITALIAN pilots who came over with the Nazi airmen on one of their raids made their presence known by showering trinkets over London—rings, medallions and other bits of imitation jewelery, all bearing inscriptions in Italian. One such ring, made of pewter, showed a head of Mussolini, chin thrust out, tin hat on head, and the words "Tireremo diritti," which can mean either "We shall forge ahead" or "We shall shoot straight." A medallion was inscribed with an exhortation addressed to Italians to preserve unity and follow their Leader. It is thought that this rather childish procedure is designed to encourage Italian fifth columnists in their activities, should the failure of the raiders weaken or undermine their resolution.

'Planes From Dutch East Indies

THE sum of five million guilders has recently been raised by the Netherlands Indies for the purchase of 40 Spitfires and 18 Lockheed Hudson bombers. Queen Wilhelmina offered them to King George "for the furtherance of our common cause, and as a tribute to the magnificent work of the R.A.F." The King, accepting the offer, said: "Such a noble tribute to the unremitting work of the R.A.F. both in attack and defence will be a great encouragement to them." Following this gift came a cable to Lord Beaverbrook from the British Spitfire Fund at Batavia, remitting their first instalment of £5,000.

Fate of Tel Aviv Raiders

ON September 9 a number of Italian 'planes bombed Tel Aviv, the modern Jewish coastal town north of Jaffa. Bombs were dropped indiscriminately, far from any possible military objectives. Houses were destroyed, fires were started, and the resulting casualties were 111 killed and 151 severely wounded. But Nemesis overtook the raiders returning to their base, and four of them crashed mysteriously on or near the Turkish coast. One nose-dived into the sea and was seen no more. Two made good descents on the water and the wings of their aircraft kept them afloat for a few hours. Italian Red Cross 'planes picked up some members of their crews, but it was thought that six men were drowned. The pilot of the fourth raider had evidently been interrupted in his death-dealing task, for he jettisoned half his cargo of bombs into the sea before landing on the shore with one of his three engines burnt out.

Tate Gallery Bombed

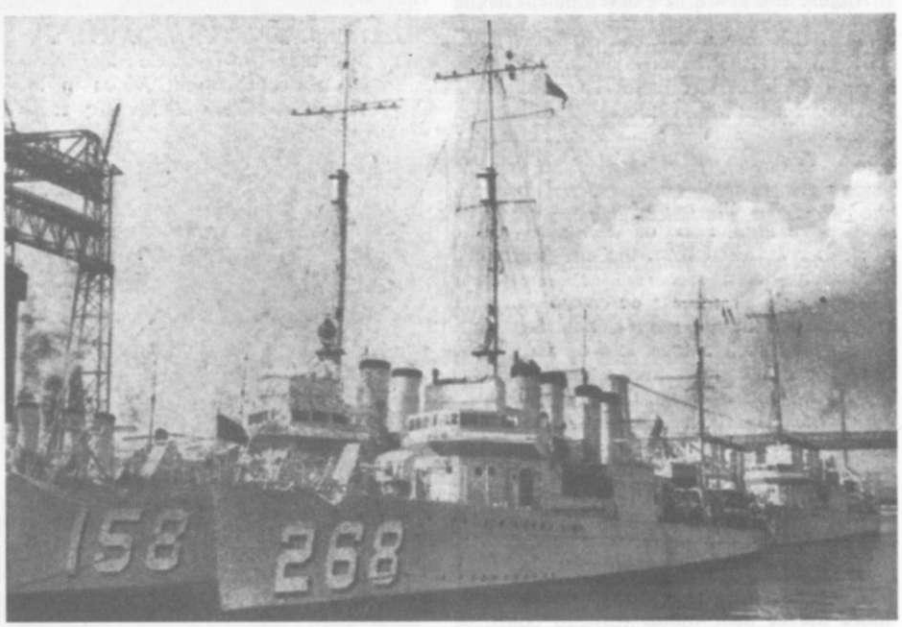
ONE of London's buildings to suffer in the recent raids was the Tate Gallery, Millbank. A heavy bomb burst close by it, the blast shattering the entire glass roof and damaging the east wall. Mr. John Rothenstein and a staff of eight were in the building at the time, but none were hurt. Owing to the director's foresight not a single picture was exposed to injury, for during six days before and after the outbreak of war works of art to the number of 4,000 were distributed in safe places throughout the country, far from military objectives. The rest repose in the cellars of the Tate. Except for the east wall, no structural damage was done, and the new Duveen Gallery, apart from its glass roof, escaped unharmed.

The Civilians' V.C.

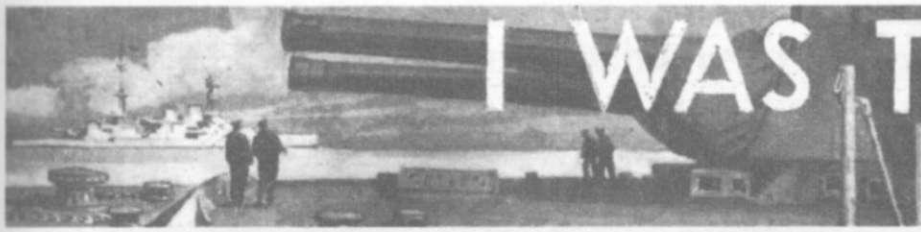
IN the course of his inspiring broadcast on September 23 H.M. the King announced the creation of "a new mark of honour for men and women in all walks of civilian life," to consist of the George Cross, ranking next to the Victoria Cross, and the George Medal for wider distribution. A statement issued later from Downing Street said that, although the immediate object of the institution of the George Cross is to reward acts of gallantry arising out of enemy action, it will also be awarded for other brave deeds. It will take the place of the Medal of the Order of the British Empire for Gallantry, the E.G.M., which will be absorbed. There will be a small Military Division of the Cross to permit of its award on occasion to members of the Fighting Services. The George Medal will rank with medals awarded for gallantry and distinguished conduct. Lord Chatfield is to act as chairman of the Committee on Gallantry Awards for Civil Defence.

Naming Our New Destroyers

THE naming of the fifty destroyers transferred from the U.S. Navy to our own, and now on their way to this country, has been under earnest consideration. One M.P. would have liked them to retain their original names; another asked whether they might not be called after our Colonies. But the inspired suggestion of a woman—Miss Tania Long, American correspondent on the London staff of the New York "Herald Tribune"—has provided a happy solution to the problem. As Mr. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, announced on September 17, they are to be the names of towns and villages common to both countries. The leading destroyer of the first flotilla is to be named Churchill, a place-name found in North Devon, in Somerset, in Worcestershire (twice), and in Oxfordshire, near Chipping Norton, as well as in Nevada and three other parts of the U.S.A., and in Canada. "By the happiest of coincidences," commented a "Manchester Guardian" leader writer, "there is also a living Churchill whose surname is not unassociated with the war effort of this country and therefore with the hopes of all those who care for liberty on the other side of the Atlantic." The other ships of this flotilla will be known as Caldwell, Cameron, Castleton, Chelsea, Chesterfield, Clare, Campbeltown. Names on a similar basis for the other flotillas will shortly be announced.



Two of the American destroyers which are being transferred by the United States to the British Navy are being given a final clean up before sailing for Canadian waters to be handed over to British crews. They still bear their original numbers, but their new names will be given at their final overhaul. *Photo, Planet News*



I WAS THERE!

Eye Witness Stories of Episodes and Adventures in the Second Great War

We Were Roof-Watching in Oxford Street

When Oxford Street, London, was bombed during the night of September 17, three famous stores—John Lewis, D. H. Evans and Bourne & Hollingsworth—were severely damaged, but the employees and others in the shelters below the shops sustained no casualties. Members of the staffs here give their experiences.

A WATCHMAN in John Lewis's—the store which was most severely damaged—said:

I was on the seventh floor, on my way to relieve the other watch, when what I believed to be a torpedo-bomb came crashing into the side of the building near the roof.

There were two more bombs, high explosive, I think, and then came a shower of oil-bombs. By this time I was pretty stunned, having been knocked clean through a door.

It was a miracle that I was able to clamber to my feet. I don't know how I got down to the ground floor. I think I must have been blown by subsequent explosions.

Our first concern was for the people in the shelters below the building. By this time flames were spouting from the top storey.

There were more than a hundred people in one shelter and they got out fairly easily. There were several hundreds in the other shelters stretching right under the basement, and we got them away safely to a shelter in another store.

Our job was made very much easier by the splendid way the people behaved.

Sixteen-year-old Albert Bondfield, of Lewis's, was having his first spell as a roof-watcher on the night of the raid. He summed the situation up by saying: "We did have a night of it," and described his experiences as follows:

We drew lots for which watches we should do on the roof an hour at a spell, and when Mr. Dines and I drew the time we did I thought it was the perfect time, because the last bombs near us came down then.

While we were waiting for our relief, there was a scream. We threw ourselves against the sandbags, and then a bomb hit the building. Mr. Dines 'phoned down, and I climbed down the ladder on to the roof to make a more detailed report. I had just time to get against the sandbags when another bomb landed.

I 'phoned that down just as another whistled by. I put the 'phone down quick and clutched the sandbags. They came away in my hand from the blast.

Albert Bondfield, generally known as "Bonny," is here seen in his steel helmet cheerful and smiling after a "night of it," his first experience as a roof watcher.

Photo, Associated Press

Then we found the 'phone was dead. The fire was getting near, so we thought we might go. We climbed down the iron ladder and got into the building. The floor was all covered with broken bits. We went through a door that had been blown out and got to the basement.

A fireman had been hurt, so I went for the ambulance with Mr. Taylor and then fetched a doctor from Harley Street.

We gave the girls in the shelter a pick-a-back through the water from the automatic fire sprinkler. Some were more scared of being dropped in the wet than of the bombs.

Then we hunted round in the water and salvaged our things. . . . I wouldn't say I wasn't afraid. But we thought the first one was right on top of us. When it wasn't, we didn't worry any more.

Miss M. Holmes, an employee of D. H. Evans, said:

Some time ago the firm gave us the option of sleeping in our private shelter, and last night about sixty of us were in the shelter when the raid started.

We were all undressed and in our beds when we heard the first bomb dropping, but not one of us made a move.

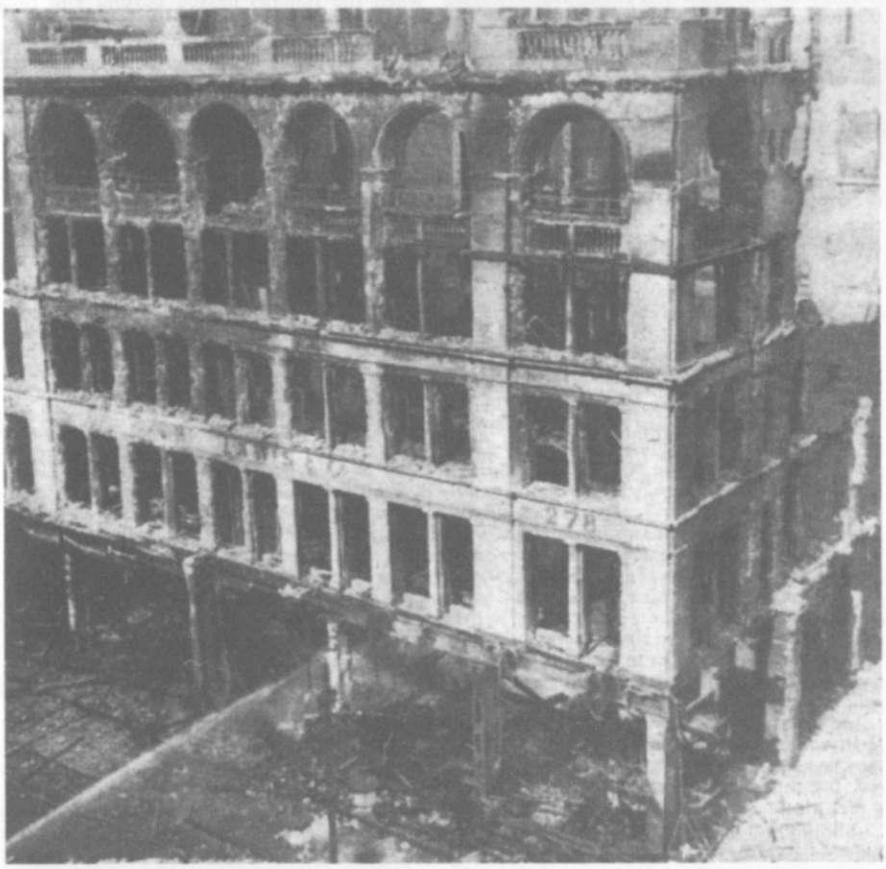
Many of the girls started cracking jokes about what they would do to Hitler if their window displays were upset.

Later we were joined by girls from Lewis's. Then, at midnight, a warden came down and told us we would all have to go to another shelter because Lewis's had been hit.

We got out of bed and dressed. Then quite unhurriedly and calmly we made our way into Oxford Street. Not one of the girls showed the slightest sign of alarm, and we made our way to other shelters near by and settled down for the night.

An official of the firm said:

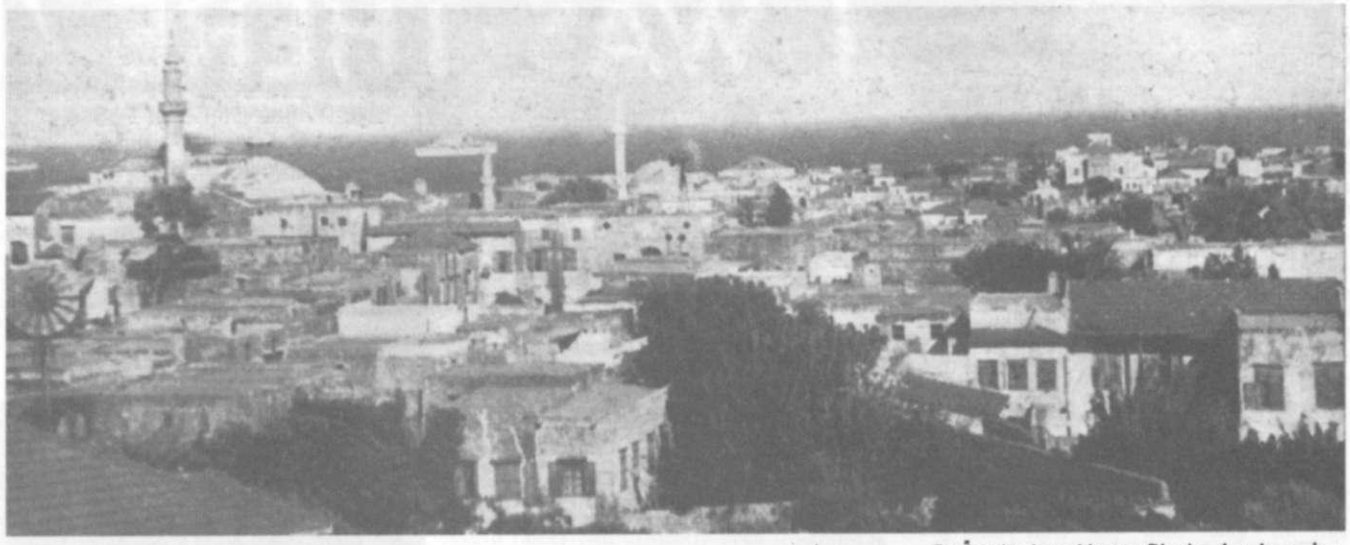
It was really wonderful to see how calm the girls were. They walked out although the raider was still overhead and the stores next door were on fire.—"*Evening News*" *and* "*Daily Express.*"



The famous Oxford Street drapery stores of John Lewis are here seen after they had been struck by high-explosive and oil bombs on the night of September 17. A fierce fire raged for many hours and on the left of the photograph the jet of water from a fire engine can be seen still playing on the smouldering ruins the next day.

Photo, "News Chronicle"

I WAS THERE!



During its long history Rhodes has been involved in many wars. Today it is an important Italian naval base, and on Sept. 5, as is told below, it was bombed and shelled by the British. Here is a view of the Old Town.
Photo, Fox

I Saw the Naval Attack on Rhodes

On September 5, 1940, a British battle squadron attacked the Italian submarine base at Rhodes, while British sea bombers raided the air bases on the island. The following dramatic impression of this action came from the "Daily Express" reporter, Alan Moorehead, who was aboard the flagship of the British squadron.

RHODES had never been raided before. It used to be a dreaming summer island of roses and wine, of fisherfolk and holiday-makers, peaceful monasteries and pine forests.

Mussolini turned it into a secret hide-out from which his submarines, bombers and torpedo-boats have been waylaying neutral and belligerent ships alike as they traded up to Greece and the Dardanelles. On September 5 it was caught unawares.

We got what we had hoped for when, the night before, sailors, airmen and gunners received their final orders from the flagship.

An hour before sunrise the fleet was in position lapped by a long easy swell. One after another, over fifty miles of ocean, silhouettes of the battleships and cruisers, destroyers and aircraft carriers detached themselves from the sea mist.

By a sickly yellow dawn light I could just see our bombers sweeping off the deck from the nearest aircraft carrier, each one heavily laden with ochre-coloured bombs. The leaders circled our flagship until the last machines were clear. Then they wheeled upward together in formation.

Away on the horizon the "Sydney" was already in action. Spouting smoke columns showed where her 6-inch shells were hitting. Then Calato awoke to find its petrol dump exploding and half a dozen aircraft blazing on the ground and the barracks in flames.

At Maritza the green airfield of Tuat lies under a monastery in a cup of hills. Five-hundred-pound bombs thudded straight through the two main hangars. Workshops and barracks took fire and another petrol tank went up with a roar.

As the 'planes left there was a cannonade and minor explosions. Then a terrific blast and a ribbon of black smoke reached far across the sea within sight of the ships eighty miles away.

Italian airmen, recovering from the first shock, ran from the blazing hangars and frantically took off. Before our bombers could return three were brought down and one more had to make a forced landing. Our only other loss occurred when one of our machines accidentally tipped off the aircraft carrier. Its crew of three were rescued by a destroyer.

While this was happening the rest of the bombers came tearing back triumphantly over the fleet and made their landings easily despite a rising sea. One after another they disappeared by hydraulic lifts into the carrier.

By now it was daylight and the naval gunners were ready for any Italian reply. It came shortly after ten o'clock as we were steaming away from the islands.

The first salvo of bombs seemed to come clear out of the sun and it thrust up a green wall of water away to the right of the flagship.

The fleet's guns opened with an aching, shuddering crash. Shells seemed to be bursting everywhere right across to the horizon.

I was caught typing behind one of the four-inch guns and the typewriter flew from my hands among a pile of books that tumbled on to the floor. I abandoned all hope of getting back my favourite perch behind the bridge.

Bits of shrapnel spattered the deck. I ducked and ran for the 15-inch gun turrets. From there I watched bomb bursts on the waves and twice followed with my eye enemy bombers skimming past at 7,000 feet.

Patiently, on the outskirts of the fight, the British pursuit 'planes waited. Then when the Italians passed beyond gun range they leaped in.

They had two down in ten minutes and three more as good as finished, casting bits off as they fled. That makes fourteen certainly destroyed and eight probably for the day.

Even in the late afternoon we were getting occasional warnings, but the fleet steamed steadily into cover of the darkness.

We Were Survivors from the Children's Ship

"This deed will shock the world," said Mr. Geoffrey Shakespeare, Under-Secretary for the Dominions, when news came of the torpedoing of the "City of Benares" with 90 child evacuees aboard, 83 of whom were lost. Heroism and endurance could not prevent darkness, storm and cold from taking their toll of child life.

THE German submarine's attack was launched without warning after dark, when the liner was 600 miles from land. Most of the 90 evacuee children were in their cots or bunks when the torpedo struck the ship. Heavy seas swamped many of the boats, greatly hampering rescue work. The survivors, after nearly 24 hours adrift in boats and on rafts in bitterly cold weather and showers of hail, were picked up by a warship.

A moving story of the disaster was told by Mr. Arthur Wimperis, the playwright, who was a passenger on the torpedoed liner. He said: I was in my cabin reading at 10 o'clock in the evening when there was a terrific crash, and one realized instantly that the ship had been torpedoed. I put on my raincoat, took my pipe and tobacco and went to my boat station.

Among other people there were 20 children mustered or to be mustered there. They came pouring up from their quarters on the lower deck. One did one's best to comfort them. We stood by until all the children had been safely stowed in our lifeboat, and a couple of sailors were in their positions.

Then we slid down a couple of ropes and got in ourselves and the order was given to lower away. We were up to our armpits in water in the boat. One could see fitfully by the light of flares dropped from the deck. We were tethered to the liner by a wire hawser. It was most difficult to loosen them, but we got the boat free in time.

The liner was now listing right over us to starboard and going down fast. We had one oar, the only thing not pitched out of the boat when she was lowered by the bows, and a Canadian friend and I shoved away for all we were worth against the side of the ship.

Shortly after we had got the lifeboat clear the ship went down. I thought it was the finish, but actually I never felt the suction at all.

There was a fair sea running and our boat floated off. The other boats did the same. This was at 10.30, when my watch stopped. We were completely awash all through the night and our great difficulty was to try and hold the children above the water. We looked like people sitting in the sea, and it was the same with the other boats.

I WAS THERE!

Night of Horror When 83 Children Died in Torpedoed Liner

Two women survivors at a West Coast port after being landed from the "City of Benares" which was torpedoed in the Atlantic in the evening of September 17.
Photos, Associated Press

People died of exposure at intervals all through the night. Among them was the padre in charge of the children. We wrapped the children in blankets, but the blankets got washed away. Everything was awash.

Mr. Wimperis continued: Morning came, and then we had our worst time, because as soon as it was light storms of hail and wind got up and the sea became tremendous. We were pretty hard put to it to keep the boat from being capsized, but we managed somehow. The boats had drifted apart. We were the last to be picked up, but one raft was picked up afterwards.

I am glad to say that as the warship came up we in our boat stood up singing "Rule, Britannia!" We managed to make quite a noise, and later the warship's crew asked which boat it was which arrived with the occupants singing. "Full marks," they said.

Of the ten grown-up escorts with the children only two were saved. One of these, Mrs. Towns, said:

I was awakened by the explosion and heard children screaming. I shouted out: "It's all right." I managed to muster my 15 children and got them to the boat deck. Most of mine were girls, and we bundled them into a lifeboat.

We were many hours in that boat. It was a horrible nightmare which will live for ever in my memory. One by one 14 of my 15 children died.

In the lifeboat we had condensed milk and biscuits. The trouble was to get the milk into our mouths before it was ruined by salt water. Waves kept pounding over us.

A story of extraordinary good fortune was that told by Mrs. Bech, of London. She was travelling to Montreal with her three children, Barbara, aged 14, Sonia, 11, and Derek, 9, and all were saved.

Mrs. Bech said:

I believe I was one of the last to leave the ship. I got two of my children, Sonia and Derek, on to a raft and Barbara into a lifeboat. Then I jumped overboard, and by some miracle landed on the raft which held Sonia and Derek.

Twice during the many hours we drifted in the terrible seas Sonia was washed off the raft. A man helped me pull her back to safety each time.

Hour after hour passed. I had almost given up all hope. I even said to my little girl, "Darling, I think we'll take off our lifebelts and go to sleep in the water."

But Sonia said, "Oh, no, mummy, don't do that yet. I'm sure we'll be picked up."

A few minutes later a warship came into sight and we were saved.

Sonia Bech said:

When we got on deck after the torpedo struck we were told to go up to the bow. From there we climbed down a ladder and we found a raft, and we all scrambled on it. For hours we were tossed about in the water. We were soaked to the skin. Seas were washing over us.

When we lay down our heads were in the water. When we tried to sit up we were blown down again by the wind. We were all very worried about Barbara.

Another vessel took us off the raft. Then we learned that a warship was coming to rescue us. When we found the warship we all stood up and cheered and shouted for the good old British Navy.

Barbara Bech told her story too.

After I got into the lifeboat I collapsed, and when I came round I looked for Mother.

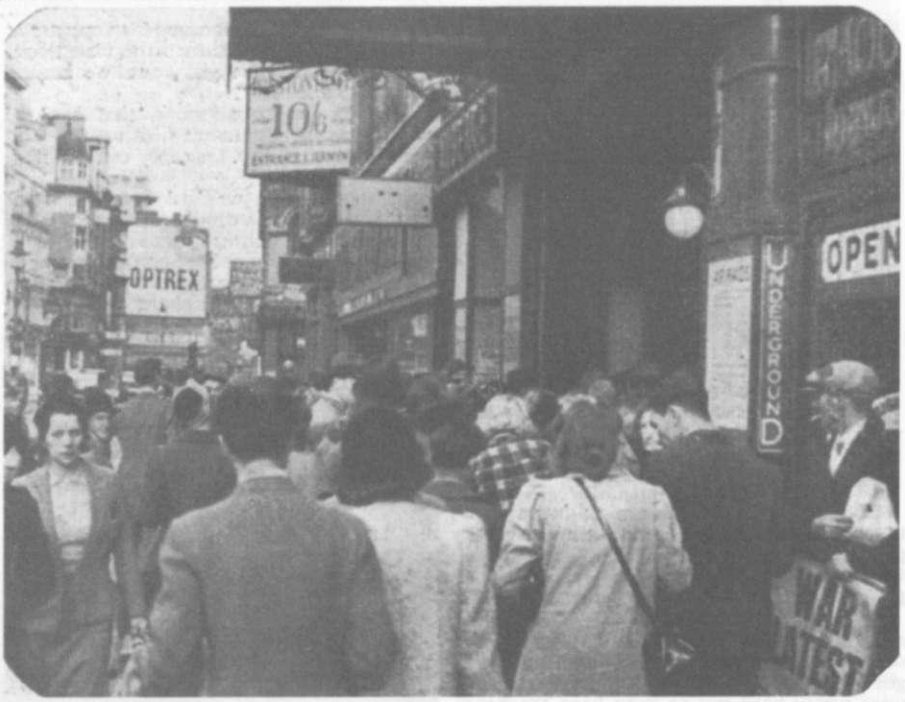
I was frantic when I couldn't find her. I sat in that lifeboat for hours, terrified that the rest of the family had been lost.

Then when the warship picked us up we all saw each other. My mother, my brother, and my sister were the first people taken aboard the warship.—("*Daily Telegraph*" *and* "*Daily Mail*")

Mr. Geoffrey Shakespeare (right), Under-secretary for the Dominions and Chairman of the Children's Overseas Reception Board, listens to the purser's story.
Photo, G.P.U.

These three children (centre) were among the few rescued from the ship. They are seen happily in port. Mrs. Lilian Towns, above, a Government escort, who was rescued.
Photo, Keystone

They Sought Sanctuary in the Tube



"ISN'T it wonderful," said the jolly-faced charwoman from Marylebone, "that for only three-ha'pence you get a whole night's sleep?"

We were sitting, she and I, sixty feet below the ground in one of the passage-ways of the Edgware Road tube station. It was only seven o'clock in the evening, but already the place was full of people spreading rugs and cushions on the floor, unpacking thermos flasks and settling themselves down for the night. Since six o'clock they had been streaming down the stairs from street level. They were laden with bundles and baskets; now they lined each side of the passages, stairs and platform—a regiment of men, women and children come to find safety from the fury of the blitzkreig which had wrecked many of their homes.

In this giant dormitory was an atmosphere of much cheerfulness. Of the hundreds who were there, most had been down on three or four consecutive nights, and were laughing, talking, and swapping stories and the day's news with all the friendliness and interest of life-long neighbours. Families were divided; fathers, behind a cloud of tobacco smoke and a screen of upheld newspapers, lined one side of the passage, while mothers settled their children off to sleep along the other. More and more people came pouring down the stairway. Soon there were no gaps in the serried ranks of settlers parked on each side of the walls. Yet no one attempted to fill up the space in the centre.

I took a train and travelled down the line to Piccadilly Circus. The platforms at every station along the way were thick with recumbent bodies. Some were already asleep, oblivious to the noise of trains and the chatter going on around them; others were propped up against the walls, talking and reading and knitting, eating apples and sandwiches, careful to put the scraps carefully into baskets or paper bags.

I got in the train again and went on to the Elephant and Castle. The station was more crowded than any I had seen, for here were people who had suffered the full force of the Air Terror; yet the atmosphere was gay and more wide-awake than at any other station. For these were the lion-hearted Cockneys, whose spirit can never be broken and who would rather stay awake and crack a joke than go to sleep and miss one.

A guard came down the platform telling them that the sirens had gone and the nightly "blitz" was on. A rousing cheer went up, and I wondered why, until the guard smilingly explained that no more trains would run from that platform, and so everyone was at liberty to "doss down" on the cushions of the train which stood alongside. It was a race between the men, for the women preferred to stay beside their sleeping children.

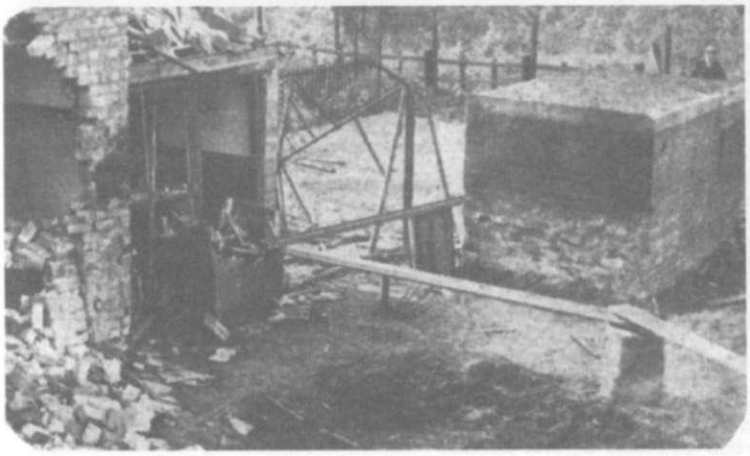
From the story by Miss Patricia Ward, reproduced here by courtesy of the "Evening Standard"; the photographs, showing scenes above and below ground, when London's tubes are being used as air-raid shelters, are reproduced here by courtesy of the "News Chronicle."

Surface Shelters Have Saved Thousands of Lives

For one reason or another the Government has decided against constructing deep underground shelters, preferring surface shelters which, as the photographs in this page show, have stood up quite well against the bombs. Right is a street in South London which was heavily bombed ; the occupants of the houses were in the shelters built in the middle of the street and so escaped unscathed.

Below is another proof that surface shelters stand against all but a direct hit. The scene is a South Coast town on which the pirates of the air have showered many bombs. The public shelter had 159 people in it ; it was undamaged and the occupants were unharmed when a bomb fell near by and covered it with debris.

Photos, Keystone



Above is the damage caused by a huge bomb that fell in the east of London. In the background are people saved by their shelters. Left is a village shelter in the north-west area that stood intact amidst ruin.

Photos, L.N.A.

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1940 *381st day*

On the Sea—British cargo steamer "Thornlea" reported sunk by U-boat in Atlantic. Irish steamer "Luimneach" reported sunk in Atlantic on September 4 by gunfire from U-boat. Survivors of British cargo boat "St. Agnes," torpedoed off Portuguese coast, landed at Lisbon.

During night enemy torpedoed "City of Benares" carrying 90 children to Canada; of 306 persons lost, 83 were children.

In the Air—R.A.F. bombers made daylight raids on port of Ostend, shipping at Zeebrugge, convoy of barges off Dutch coast, and aerodrome of Ymuiden.

During night R.A.F. made heavy and sustained attacks on eight invasion ports, damaging shipping and military stores. Gun emplacements near Cap Gris Nez attacked. Other forces bombed important distribution centres in Rhineland.

Coastal Command aircraft attacked Cherbourg harbour, sinking two supply ships.

War against Italy—Enemy attempted to consolidate their position in and around Sidi Barrani, where R.A.F. heavily bombed them. Royal Navy bombarded coast road to Sollum.

South African Air Force raided Mogadishu aerodrome for sixth time and also Javello.

Home Front—During day enemy made small-scale raids. Bombs fell in South and S.E. England; 15th cent. church wrecked. At Portsmouth church and several houses hit. Casualties in S.W. London. About 5.15 p.m. large waves of aircraft crossed Kent coast and were scattered by R.A.F. fighters.

During night raids on London incendiary bombs fell in S.E. district. High explosives fell in West End; three large stores in Oxford Street hit.

Houses and buildings damaged in Merseyside town and number of casualties caused.

Twelve German aircraft destroyed. Three British fighters lost, but pilots of two safe.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 *382nd day*

On the Sea—H.M. submarine "Narwhal" reported much overdue and presumed lost.

In the Air—Coastal Command aircraft attacked convoy off Borkum, registering direct hit on enemy destroyer. Others raided Cherbourg and aerodrome of De Kooy.

During night R.A.F. bombers launched fiercest attack yet made on invasion ports.

Other forces attacked distribution centres of Osnabruck, Ehrang, Hamm, Mannheim, and Brussels.

War against Italy—R.A.F. launched highly successful attack on enemy bases in Dodecanese Islands. Continuous raids made against enemy from Western Desert.

Home Front—Enemy daylight activity mainly confined to S.E. area, few aircraft reaching London. Bombs fell chiefly near Thames estuary, causing damage to houses.

At night A.A. barrage in London was resumed. Raiders bombed at random suburbs all round London; several heavy bombs fell in West End area. Casualties were heavy.

Severe raid on Merseyside. Bombs also fell on towns in Lancs, Midlands, North-East, South-West and Home Counties. Damage done, but casualties relatively few.

Enemy lost 48 aircraft. Twelve British fighters lost, but pilots of nine safe.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 *383rd day*

In the Air—R.A.F. bombed communications in Germany, including Dortmund-Ems Canal. Fires and explosions were caused at Ostend and Flushing. Dunkirk docks attacked, and several aerodromes.

War against Italy—C.-in-C. Mediterranean reported that Benghazi was attacked by Fleet Air Arm on Sept. 16. One merchant ship set on fire, one destroyer probably sunk, and other ships damaged. Further attack made on 19th, three large ships being set on fire.

Home Front—Small-scale daylight raids took place on Britain. Bombs fell in E. London, on coastal towns in Essex and Sussex, and at one point in West of England.

Night raids were chiefly directed against London and suburbs. Factory set on fire in East End. Escape shaft on underground shelter in N. London hit.

Bombs fell in Lancs, Essex, Surrey, Berks, and Kent, in Midlands and South-West.

Germany lost five aircraft; Britain none.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 *384th day*

On the Sea—Admiralty announced that H.M. submarine "Sturgeon" had sunk 10,000-ton enemy transport off northern point of Denmark on September 2.

THE POETS & THE WAR

XXXIII

WHEN THE STORY IS TOLD . . .

By G. M. Chaplin

(Written in a Fire Station Watchroom during a raid)

When in the after years the tale is told
Of these strange days while Britain stands at bay,
Holding the pass—as, at Thermopylae,
Leonidas—then write the names in gold,
Along with Dunkirk, Narvik, and the rest
Of Bermondsey, Whitechapel, Shoreditch, Bow,
Wapping and Rotherhithe; who stood the test
Of total war, nor flinched beneath the blow.

The people of the little streets stood firm—
And Britain stands. Remember this, Mayfair,
Whitehall and City, when at last the term
Is set to battle; think then of the share
So bravely borne, our freedom to defend,
By front line folk of Borough and East End.

—*Daily Telegraph*

In the Air—R.A.F. again made concentrated attacks on invasion ports along French, Belgian and Dutch coasts.

Dortmund-Ems Canal again bombed. Supply train travelling towards Munster attacked, and bombs dropped on yards at Hamm, Ehrang, Krefeld, Mannheim and Soest.

Coastal Command aircraft scored direct hits on two supply ships off Dutch coast

War against Italy—R.A.F. bombed aerodrome at Menastir, Western Desert, and damaged motor transport at Sidi Barrani. In East Africa Diredawa and Berbera successfully bombed, as was Gura aerodrome.

Home Front—Large force of raiders crossed S.E. coast in morning, but were driven back by our fighters before reaching London area. Bombs fell in Brighton, resulting in damage and casualties.

During night gliding raider dived and dropped two bombs in Central London. Incendiaries fell in S.E. London.

Four German aircraft shot down. Britain lost seven fighters, but pilots of three safe.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 *385th day*

In the Air—R.A.F. continued attacks by both day and night on invasion bases in Channel ports.

Aircraft of Coastal Command bombed convoy of twelve merchant ships near Boulogne. Large supply ship south of Borkum and two smaller ships near Dutch island of Ameland were successfully attacked.

War against Italy—R.A.F. bombed aerodrome and troop positions at Sidi Barrani and made reconnaissance flights over enemy territory in Western Desert. S. African Air Force attacked Birkas.

Enemy made ineffectual raid on Alexandria. Haifa was raided, resulting in damage and casualties.

Home Front—During day enemy activities were limited to isolated operations in S.E. England by aircraft flying singly or in small numbers. Industrial building hit in E. London, causing casualties. Bombs fell in Surrey, Sussex and Essex, but little damage and few casualties were reported.

In evening 60 to 70 German aircraft flew from Thames Estuary towards London, but were driven off after numerous combats with our fighters. During night incendiary bombs fell on N.W. and S.W. districts of London, causing many small fires. Another hospital in Central area hit. Church in S.E. London destroyed.

Town in N.W. England attacked, causing damage to houses. Damage and casualties resulted from bombs in 20 towns and villages in S.E. outside London area.

Enemy lost two aircraft, Britain none.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 *386th day*

On the Sea—Admiralty announced that H.M. sloop "Dundee" had been sunk by U-boat.

In the Air—R.A.F. carried out widespread operations in Germany, Holland, Belgium and France. Aluminium works at Lauta, north-east of Dresden, bombed, as were railways in this area.

Strong forces of bombers attacked docks harbours and shipping at Channel ports.

War against Italy—British naval forces attacked enemy positions in Sidi Barrani area. These were also bombed by R.A.F., as was Menastir aerodrome. Enemy attacked Malta, damaging ten houses in a village.

Home Front—During day isolated aircraft crossed E. and S.E. coasts. Bombs fell in country districts in East Anglia, Hants, Kent, two towns in Sussex and in N.W. and S.E. districts of London.

During night relays of single aircraft dropped bombs over widely scattered areas in London, damaging houses and industrial premises and causing casualties.

Bombs also fell on towns in S.E. England.

Germany lost one aircraft, Britain none.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 *387th day*

In the Air—Throughout night R.A.F. heavily bombarded military objectives in and around Berlin, including Rangsdorf railway station, West and Wilmersdorf power stations, and two gas works.

Other forces bombed aircraft works at Wismar, lock gates on Kiel Canal, shipyards and docks at Hamburg and elsewhere, goods yards, railway communications and several aerodromes. Channel invasion ports again vigorously attacked.

War Against Italy—R.A.F. again attacked Mena tir aerodrome. Two raids made on Tobruk harbour.

Home Front—H.M. the King announced creation of new honours for civilians—the George Cross and the George Medal.

During day British fighters engaged large formations of enemy aircraft over Kent and Essex. Deliberate attacks made on Sussex seaside towns, particularly Eastbourne.

Night bombing over London again took place. Raiders flew over N.W. suburb and also over S. London. Bombs fell on outlying suburbs to South and East and in one district of Central London.

Enemy aircraft also reported over S.W. S.E., N.W. England, and Wales.

Nazis lost 11 aircraft. Britain also lost 11, but pilots of seven safe.

Africa—General de Gaulle, with a Free French Force, and accompanied by a British Naval Squadron, arrived off Dakar. Governor rejected ultimatum, and opened fire which was returned by British warships.